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General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

40th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 24 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/50/444/Addendum 6.

In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 19 and 22 September and 2, 4 16 and 18 October 1995, Chad has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29 *(continued)*

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

The President: This afternoon we hold the last meeting of the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, President of the Republic of Albania

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, President of the Republic of Albania.

His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, President of the Republic of Albania, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Berisha: I deem it a special pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly for its fiftieth session, as well as the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his skilful leadership of the Organization.

Today, 50 years after the United Nations Charter entered into force, we have come here with the unflinching confidence that the purposes and principles enshrined in it have served and will serve mankind to attain its aspirations to peace and global security, the equality of peoples and their right to self-determination, international cooperation for development and progress, and respect for freedoms and human rights.

The Republic of Albania highly appreciates the contribution of the United Nations during this half-

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century to the prevention of a global conflict, the settlement of conflicts, the enhancement of international security, and the mitigation of the suffering of millions of people caught in the grip of conflicts or poverty, and its support for economic development in the world and for the democratic process.

The United Nations is commemorating its fiftieth anniversary at an important turning-point in the great achievements of mankind, among them the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the communist dictatorships, under which many countries, including Albania, suffered a great deal. The fall of the Iron Curtain — and the United Nations also had a positive influence on that event — averted the threat of a large-scale confrontation and ushered in a period of difficult transition for the countries of Eastern Europe, but not only for them. In this process, international institutions turned out to be not always interlocking, but sometimes interblocking.

The international community, heading into the twenty-first century, is growing ever more aware of the need to redirect its advance towards a more reliable international order for everyone. The United Nations and its agencies can render a new contribution to this trend, to the benefit of present history.

As a Balkan country, Albania is greatly concerned about the infringement of human values and the violation of the international conventions and agreements in the former Yugoslavia. We have condemned Serbian aggression — the cause of the suffering of millions of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina — and the creation of "ethnically cleansed" territories by force. We support the peace talks initiated by the United States, and we take the view that the involvement of troops of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is vital, not only to establish peace and a lasting settlement that does not rehabilitate the aggressor in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also to prevent a chain of conflicts in the Balkans and beyond — something that the ultra-nationalist forces would like to instigate.

Besides, the Balkan crisis started in Kosova, and without a settlement of the Kosova issue, there can be no long-term peace in the former Yugoslavia or stability in the Balkans. It is indispensable that the questions of putting an end to the violation of the human and national rights of the Albanians in Kosova, restoring the democratic institutions there and commencing talks between the Belgrade authorities and the legitimate representatives of the Albanians of Kosova, in the presence of a third party — talks including the question of resolving Kosova's future status in accordance with international agreements — be included in the package of Contact Group negotiations on a solution to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. By insisting on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/204 of last December, which includes these demands, the United Nations would be doing a great service for peace and security in our region and continent.

Albania remains determined to oppose the changing of borders through violence and to establish relations of regional cooperation with its neighbours. In compliance with this policy, we consider as a real achievement the commitment — an undertaking by the Presidents of Bulgaria, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania in this very palace of the United Nations two days ago — to build an integrating horizontal transport and telecommunications corridor to radiate to other States, within and outside the region. This corridor will bring greater closeness and unity between our countries themselves, between the Balkan countries and the European Union, and between East and West. The project has aroused the interest of the European Union and the United States. We would greatly appreciate the commitment of the World Bank and other financial institutions to its realization.

I think that the vertical corridor between Ljubljana and Athens could be the object of another integrating project in the Balkan peninsula.

Over the 50 years since the inception of the United Nations, Albania survived one of the most bitter dictatorial experiences of the continent. In flagrant violation of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which it had signed, more than 400,000 Albanians were jailed, interned, tortured or executed, and thousands of religious institutions in the country, many of them centuries old, were dynamited and demolished.

I am very pleased to declare today that the rule of law and the market economy have been established in Albania and that all the former communist laws have been replaced. Though, in the past, it was a country where freedoms and human rights were prohibited by law, in Albania today there are hundreds of private newspapers and magazines. From a country where religious beliefs were banned, it has turned into a centre of religious tolerance *par excellence*. A country that used to regard the Bretton Woods institutions as enslaving, it now cooperates very successfully with them, as it does with very many different United Nations agencies.

Although it was the last State to sign the Helsinki Final Act, Albania today meets the criteria of the Copenhagen Document on human and minority rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Though, in the past, a country of total collectivism, the Albania of today attributes 75 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to the private sector and boasts a two-digit economic-growth rate and a one-digit inflation rate, while the GDP-foreign debt ratio is less than 10 per cent.

All this testifies that freedom is working in Albania. From the most isolated and closed country of the planet, it has turned into a country which has resolutely committed itself to full integration into the international community — at the regional level by becoming a member of the Council of Europe, and at the global level by actively participating in the activities of this Organization. Albania has attached due importance to fulfilment of its financial obligations to the United Nations and has expressed its willingness, and made preparations, to provide troops for United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The decision of the Albanian Government to declare the country a candidate for a non-permanent Security Council seat allocated to the Eastern European Group for the term 1996-1997 is an expression of the will and readiness of Albania for more active participation in the Organization. We think that the small countries too can make a valuable contribution to the United Nations, and we consider the lack of equitable representation an expression of discrimination against them that violates the very spirit of the Charter.

The Republic of Albania supports the proposal to increase the membership of the Security Council, as this would better conform to the new reality and would add to efficiency in the Council's work. The increase in the number of Members of the Organization — more than threefold — over the last 50 years calls for a reassessment of the role of the small States, which are very interested in having a powerful Organization and aspire to making an active contribution to its activity. We consider it important to create conditions in which these countries enjoy more equitable representation on the main organs.

With the adoption of the Declaration at the end of these special meetings, the Republic of Albania will commit itself to cooperation towards revitalizing the role of the United Nations in the fields of peace, progress, equality and justice, with a view to serving the present generation and guaranteeing a better world for future generations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Albania for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, President of the Republic of Albania, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Fidel Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

His Excellency Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Ramos: As a country that signed the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945, and as the current Chairman of the Group of 77, the Philippines considers it an exciting privilege to take part in the work of the United Nations.

In five turbulent decades we have seen the decolonization of virtually the whole world, the rise of human rights to the forefront of world concerns, the engagement of our world community in reform for the welfare of children, women, minorities and the environment, and, most of all, the work of re-engineering development in the poor regions of the world. Now we must ensure that this Organization is adequate to meet the challenges of a new era.

Let us remember that the United Nations was created — as the Charter says —

> "to promote … better standards of life in larger freedom"

all over the world.

Today, we know that poor countries — given the right policies and just a little assistance — can actually develop and raise their standards of living. Yet, sadly, we find in the developed countries, and even in some of the more advanced developing nations, a deplorable effort to turn back the tide by closing their markets to exports from other countries and raising false issues about the environment and labour standards.

We must therefore now press forward even more intensively the work of the United Nations to spread economic progress and social justice, the lack of which is the root cause of conflict. Let us with equal dispatch strengthen the United Nations agencies involved in promoting social justice and economic progress.

The fact remains that the gap between rich and poor nations endures, and in some cases is widening by dangerous proportions. Peace cannot grow in any society gripped by poverty and misery.

In the work of peacemaking, adjustments are clearly in order. While the threat to global peace from nuclear confrontation has greatly diminished, in its place have arisen many regional and ethnic conflicts that are as deadly and that constitute both a challenge and an affront to the collective conscience of mankind. Therefore, we should not neglect the chance to push the United Nations into a more forthright stand against all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, for terrorism is a dagger aimed at the very heart of each nation's security, and at global stability.

Moreover, we must condemn the grotesque obsession with nuclear weapons and other instruments of mass destruction and work concertedly for the conclusion next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty that will put a stop to all nuclear testing for all time.

On behalf of the Group of 77, I also draw the Assembly's attention to the problems arising from the large-scale migration of workers. For the great majority of them, migration means deprivation of rights, double standards in the eyes of the law and, worse, exposure to violence and abuse. We urge the convening by the United Nations of an international conference specifically to address the plight of migrant workers. That the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families remains to be ratified by many countries is just one more reminder of the difficult road we still have to travel.

Finally, let us not allow this commemoration to pass without addressing the issue of reforming the United Nations, its organization, its processes and its finances. The most efficient organization in the world cannot effectively function without stable and predictable financing. We therefore call upon all Members to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations and to do so on time. We support reform of the Security Council itself. We believe that the membership should be enlarged and reapportioned to ensure equitable representation of all geographic regions and of the developing countries.

This is not to express impatience with an institution that has served our world with such dedication for half a century. This is rather to express the hope that our United Nations of the future will be even more caring and proactive and the bridge to the fulfilment of our peoples' aspirations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of the Philippines for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Cde. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

His Excellency Cde. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Mugabe: The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is indeed an occasion to reflect on its past, present and future role and function. We join the chorus of well-deserved praise to the United Nations for its sterling role in the prevention of global conflict and for its support of the various struggles for decolonization and the achievement of self-determination.

For us in Africa, the contribution of the United Nations in the decolonization and democratization processes has been an outstanding and honourable one, with the result that today southern Africa, once described by a Portuguese seafarer as a "region of storms", has finally and truly become a region of good hope where the oppressive settler regimes once consolidated by the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, apartheid and other ruthless systems of governance have succumbed to the revolutionary will of the majority, paving the way to peace, stability and regional cooperation.

But the departure of colonial rule has not left us unscathed. The ethnic and tribal hostilities fomented by colonial regimes in their divide-and-rule power strategy have persisted in several of our countries, tearing some of our nations apart. The intensity and viciousness of ethnic wars are as manifest in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Somalia, as they are in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and yet genocide taking place in Rwanda is accorded less significance by the world than genocide in Bosnia. Somalia is left burning while catastrophe stalks. Western United Nations forces withdraw from Somalia only to deploy under the cover of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Bosnia. Where, we ask, is the brotherhood of man? Where, we ask, is man's impartiality? Where, indeed, is the proof of his non-racialism? Is it a scourge to be black, we ask?

What has happened to our universally accepted concept of the global village? Do we need drug traffickers, merchants of terrorism and pandemic diseases to be persuaded that the concept is real enough? I fear that, if we today neglect the tragedy of the millions of the starving poor and refugees, we shall tomorrow surely reap the whirlwind of another "black death".

The many changes that have taken place in our international relations demand to be reflected in the structures of our international organizations. The need for the restructuring and transformation of the United Nations to reflect the realities of today's world and not those of 50 years ago is exceedingly urgent. The Security Council, as now constituted, empowers only a small minority of the victorious allies of a war of half a century ago to continue to wield sweeping powers that enable it to take or block decisions affecting the destiny of the majority of Member States sitting in the General Assembly. This despotism in the Security Council, especially the power of veto, defies logic and runs counter to the very democratic principles and values that are demanded of Member States in their domestic political practices. We have listened to the statements of the leaders of these historically privileged countries, and none of them made any reference at all to the need for democratizing this institution. I ask them all to answer the question of whether or not they accept the principle of democracy for the United Nations. Is it yes or no?

Membership in the Security Council must reflect a fair geographical representation of all the regions in the world. Indeed, the United Nations system as a whole needs to be reformed and revitalized in order to render it more transparent, accountable and democratic.

Our hope that the establishment of the World Trade Organization would herald a new framework for an equitable and fair international trading system is already proving forlorn. Current trade relations are still bedeviled by the old reflexes of protectionism and unilateralism. The Bretton Woods institutions remain unreformed and, as their structures continue to defy democracy, they continue to act as dictatorial taskmasters on behalf of the world's rich and powerful nations, their harsh and punitive measures thus wreaking havoc on our poor societies still struggling to wriggle out from under the colonial legacy of misery and developmental neglect.

It is no secret that the United Nations is now in the grip of a financial crisis. For the Organization to meet its growing responsibilities and challenges, Member States have to honour their Charter obligations. A car without fuel will not perform; neither can a United Nations without resources.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's commitment to work for a better world, while reiterating the view that the challenge of today is for us to transform and strengthen our world body for the benefit of future generations. A democratic world needs democratic institutions at both the national and the international levels. The United Nations must therefore reflect that world.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for his statement.

His Excellency Cde. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, President of the Republic of Lithuania

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, President of the Republic of Lithuania.

His Excellency Mr. Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Brazauskas (*spoke in Lithuanian; English text furnished by the delegation*): All of us gathered here in the most important assembly hall of the planet are united by the hope and belief in a new world order, in a world based on the unity of nations in the pursuit of peace and prosperity on Earth. It is not solely for the purpose of marking this special occasion that we should reflect upon the experience of this unique Organization. We must enhance its effectiveness and establish new collective mechanisms to surmount the challenges of the present and those that lie ahead.

Since the collapse of the bipolar system, the world has been more acutely confronted with old and seemingly intractable problems in the fields of international migration, population and the environment. New concerns dealing with the development and consolidation of peace, social justice and democracy have emerged.

Lithuania considers the State responsibility for good governance and economic and social stability to be the means to guarantee human security and prosperity. At the same time, we are striving to build a civil society that can actively and responsibly participate in the resolution of international problems.

Today Lithuania takes pride in its good relations with all neighbouring States. These relations are based on law and the principles of good-neighbourliness. To achieve this, we had to transcend negative historical stereotypes, as well as to overcome re-emergent suspicion and mistrust. The world could achieve significant progress if the majority of States succeeded in maintaining such cooperative relations with their own neighbours.

Today, the role of the United Nations has increased significantly in the realm of international peace and security. Lithuania supports the leading role of the United Nations in peace-keeping operations and the recommendations laid out in "An Agenda for Peace".

Present-day realities confirm that the ideological confrontations of the cold-war era have been replaced by long-term localized conflicts. The importance of preventive diplomacy becomes even more evident in preventing the outbreak of armed conflicts and the humanitarian crises that often accompany them. For this reason, Lithuania greatly values the work of the Organization in this area as well as in post-conflict situation management. The new era demands more effective and complementary interaction with regional structures, such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Western European Union.

We are in favour of a more defined distribution of goals and tasks and increased coordination of the respective activities of United Nations peace-keeping operations and preventive diplomacy missions. Lithuania actively participates in these initiatives and is willing to increase its involvement in the maintenance of international security.

Lithuania is well aware of the fact there could be no other United Nations. At the same time, we understand the need for reform of this institution. The United Nations, like its Member States, has had its share of successes and failures. The Organization has not had the capacity to keep up with the ever-evolving challenges facing the international community. The United Nations has thus fallen into a deep crisis and a difficult financial situation. Regrettably, this also points to a clear lack of collective political will on the part of Member States.

Reform must begin with the strengthening of the United Nations system and the expansion of the Security Council. Lithuania supports the inclusion of Germany and Japan among the permanent members of the Security Council and seeks to ensure the adequate representation of the interests of small States in this body. The Organization must resolutely meet the ever-evolving challenges to humankind: transnational crime, drug trafficking, international terrorism and the spread of AIDS.

We do not question the priority accorded to international peace and security issues. But the security and peace-keeping functions of the United Nations should not be pursued at the expense of economic and social programmes. We will seek to have the economic and social policy needs and priorities of the countries in transition reflected in the "Agenda for Development", as we did earlier this year with respect to the work of the international conferences in Copenhagen and Beijing.

Fifty years of United Nations work have been crowned with tangible and laudable achievements. Most importantly, the number of democratic States has increased dramatically over those years. The global nuclear threat has decreased. Yet the thread of life remains vulnerable. We have no other choice but to live together, seeking to better understand one another and to cooperate more closely.

That is the basis of my optimism and faith in man as well as in the future.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Lithuania for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, President of the Republic of Finland

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, President of the Republic of Finland.

His Excellency Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Ahtisaari: The founding fathers of the United Nations had the vision of a global system of collective security. Mindful of the lessons of the 1930s, they wanted to ensure prompt action by the United Nations to keep watch on the state of peace and security, seek cooperative solutions, and deal effectively with aggression. The cold war ruined this vision. Now we have the historic opportunity to restore the United Nations as originally conceived. Yet our Organization is crippled by massive non-payment of properly assessed contributions, in breach of Charter obligations. I am deeply concerned about this tendency to run down the United Nations.

It is also customary to criticize the United Nations and its Secretariat. I have worked in the United Nations, and I know that there are a great many dedicated and competent men and women in this Organization, led by our Secretary-General.

Today the world needs the United Nations for global governance: to foster peace and enhance the rights of every human being through sustainable development. Our immediate task is to provide effective follow-up to the successful conferences held in Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing.

More than ever, the Security Council is needed to ensure effective action for peace. A representative Security Council, reflecting the realities of today's world, is the best guarantee of effectiveness. Finland therefore supports an enlarged Security Council, including new permanent members from all regions.

The end of the cold war has provided the United Nations with new opportunities to strengthen international peace and security. It has helped the world to focus on threats to our common security which are not amenable to resolution by military means. This is already true in Europe, the principal theatre of the cold war, with the European Union as the main actor projecting stability and prosperity throughout the continent.

Two recent reports of the Secretary-General have focused global discussion. "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" provide a wealth of ideas to meet the challenges of the post-cold-war world. It is our duty, as leaders, to turn ideas into practice.

I shall take up one proposal which the Secretary-General placed before us in his Agenda for Peace. He has suggested that the United Nations should have its own rapid reaction force when there is an emergency need for peace-keeping troops.

I find myself in profound sympathy with the Secretary-General's concerns. My own involvement with the United Nations has convinced me of the need for the international community to react in a rapid and concrete manner to emergencies. I am convinced that the United Nations should establish, as part of the reform, an effective, integrated, multinational crisis management capability to meet the challenge of future emergencies.

Discussion to date has shown that perhaps the most practical way to make progress in the short term is to further develop the existing stand-by forces arrangement. Stand-by arrangements are not enough to guarantee the availability of troops. Therefore we must think ahead. The Nordic experience in peace-keeping provides a solid foundation for innovation. The Nordic countries have already created two joint battalions that now operate successfully as part of the United Nations peace forces in the former Yugoslavia.

A well trained and lean force that could be quickly dispatched by the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to perform demanding humanitarian or peace-keeping missions is a necessity for the future. The Government of Finland is at present preparing a Finnish stand-by force for this very purpose.

I propose that the Secretary-General entrust an eminent person, independent and well qualified in both the military and political practice of peace-keeping, to sift from the plethora of ideas a limited number of practical and politically feasible recommendations for action by the time of the next General Assembly.

For five decades, the United Nations has sought to provide security in the broadest sense of the word. The world Organization has been a source of inspiration and an obstacle to cynicism. We may not always recognize its efforts, and we may sometimes even resent them. But we cannot do without it.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Finland for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, President of the Republic of Finland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia.

His Excellency Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Ter-Petrossian (*interpretation from French*): Armenia, as a State, was not among the original signatories of the United Nations Charter. Nevertheless Armenia, as a nation, had sent to the battlefields of the Second World War some 600,000 of its sons and daughters, nearly half of whom never came home. It is in their memory that Armenia, as an independent State, is proud to take its rightful place in this Assembly to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

In view of the situation in 1945, it was only natural that the Charter of the United Nations should deal primarily with the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations played a pivotal role in the reconstruction that followed the devastation of the world war, and it has so far been able to prevent the world being plunged into global conflict. Even during the cold war, the very existence of an international forum in which countries might discuss global issues prevented the outbreak of many conflicts.

The United Nations continues to play a constructive role in containing regional conflicts, for instance in the negotiations aimed at settling the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In this respect, I should like to reaffirm the resolve of the Armenian side to comply with the longstanding cease-fire and to transform it, as soon as possible, into a lasting peace.

Safeguarding peace is but one of the objectives of the Organization. The United Nations, and the world, have made significant progress on many fronts since 1945. Thanks to the decolonization process, the elimination of apartheid, the collapse of the old order and the emergence of new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union, hundreds of millions of people have been assured the fundamental right of self-determination and their rightful voice in the community of nations.

Our Organization has also enabled nations the world over to express their views on a broad range of subjects, including strategies for economic and social development, human rights, environmental protection and the promotion of international law. At the same time, the work of United Nations specialized agencies has directly improved the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

Armenia would like the United Nations to be strengthened and to be accorded greater respect. We are grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, for the tireless efforts he has made to reform the United Nations system in this changing world. Under his guidance, substantial progress has been made in the management of the Organization. At his initiative, discussions have taken place in recent years on the proposals he made in "An Agenda for Peace", in "An Agenda for Development" and, more recently, in his "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'".

Before concluding, I should like to salute all those who have served the United Nations over the past 50 years, and to pay special tribute to the men and women who have given their lives in the line of duty. We honour their memory, and we pledge to continue their mission.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the President of the Republic of Armenia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti.

His Excellency Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Aristide (*interpretation from French*): I am pleased to greet Your Excellencies on behalf of the Government and the people of Haiti. Today, both in our own country and in the diaspora — or our "tenth province" — 7 million Haitians chant in unison, "Continued peace, happiness and success for the great family of the United Nations".

Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is especially meaningful for the world's first independent black republic. It gives us the opportunity also to celebrate the first anniversary of the return of democracy to Haiti. Our return to Haiti, on 15 October 1994, after three years of exile, and the peace achieved through this democratic process constitute a political miracle. I say humbly but unequivocally that this is the first time that such a miracle has taken place anywhere in the world. It came about thanks to the heroism and courage of the Haitian people, to the leadership of President Clinton, to you, Mr. Secretary-General, and to all of our dear United Nations friends. Gratitude is the heart's memory; let the beating of our hearts express our intense joy at having together achieved this miracle of the century.

Now that peace has been restored, domestic production has increased by 3 per cent, while in 1994 it had declined by 10 per cent. By December 1995, the rate of growth may rise to 4.5 per cent. Earnings are 85 per cent higher than those of the two years preceding our return. Today they amount to 2.231 billion gourdes, or 7.5 per cent of our gross national product. Moreover, our budget deficit has been reduced from 1.4 billion gourdes to 350 million gourdes. In three years' time, 85 per cent of our population will be not illiterate, but literate.

These figures give us new hope and are a sign of the light of peace that floods our hearts, dazzles our eyes and drives out the shadows of violence. Gunfire no longer crackles. *Zam yo bèbè*. The army has met with disaster; it no longer exists. *Li kraze*. In our Parliament, I hope we shall soon be observing its official funeral.

The establishment of a national police force and the enactment of judicial reform are breathing new life into our democracy. Justice safeguards social bonds; it nurtures reconciliation, dignity and respect for the rights of the individual. It is in that context that legislative elections have taken place as we await our presidential elections, which are certain to be free, honest and democratic.

Yes, today the blooming of these first flowers of democracy is emitting a sweet aroma of peace and hope; may the great United Nations family spread this delicious perfume throughout the world. May this peace bloom at last in Bosnia, in Georgia, in Rwanda, in Burundi.

By the year 2050 the world's population will have reached 10 billion. May our hearts be fired by enthusiasm to prepare a better world for these people and to light up the history of mankind as it approaches the end of the millennium. In that way the United Nations will be crowned with a halo of glory, pride and peace.

If we all stand together, this will be possible, for: alone we are weak; together we are strong; all together, we are *lavalas*.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Haiti for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi.

His Excellency Mr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Muluzi: The United Nations is 50 years old today, and this is cause for celebration. Where I come from, old age is traditionally associated with wisdom. The United Nations has learnt from its experience and has become wiser with time. This is one of the many reasons why we, the people of Malawi, believe that the United Nations deserves to be supported, and to be treated with even greater respect than ever before.

It would have been nice if the United Nations had performed miracles these past 50 years. It would have been nice if, for example, it had succeeded in preventing human beings from wantonly slaughtering each other on a regular basis. The United Nations has failed to perform this particular miracle: human beings all over the world continue to kill each other for political, tribal, religious and all sorts of other reasons. Despite our wishes, the world has yet to become one big, happy family. And this means that the United Nations still has a crucial role to play in bringing peace, stability, freedom and justice to the world.

Malawi applauds the role played by the United Nations in promoting social and economic development and in championing the causes of the world's poor. The "Agenda for Peace" recently devised by the United Nations firmly established the linkage between global peace and development. The simple fact is that we can never have peace until we have social justice, and we can never have social justice until we address the economic issues faced by most of our Member countries today.

We also wish to applaud the United Nations for its campaign to promote the rule of law among Member States, as shown by the Organization's uncompromising insistence on the observance of human rights.

With the cold war over and political ideology playing less and less of a role in international affairs, it is unfortunate that one great country, China, remains divided for ideological reasons. Malawi therefore wishes to register its support for efforts to reconcile the two sides and to resolve the issue of division with a view to eventual reunification. This would be within the spirit of democracy which the United Nations stands for.

Malawi wishes to join other Member States in endorsing the platforms of action agreed upon at the World Summit for Social Development, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as constituting a noble and viable agenda for the United Nations as it sets out on the journey into the next 50 years and beyond.

Once again, the people and the Government of Malawi congratulate you, Mr. Secretary-General, and you, Mr. President, on this most auspicious occasion. Long live the United Nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Malawi for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Samper Pizano *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The commemoration of the first 50 years of the United Nations is an excellent opportunity to look at the past and plan for the future.

A review of history teaches us lessons we cannot ignore. Genuine multilateralism, that is, decisions based on the will of majorities, has allowed humanity to rid itself of some of its worst problems, such as colonialism, apartheid and the nuclear arms race.

Last week, in Cartagena de Indias, the Non-Aligned Movement held its XI Conference of Heads of State or Government, and Colombia assumed the chairmanship of the Movement for the next three years. In Cartagena, the Non-Aligned countries reaffirmed the full validity of the Movement and its will to work actively for the benefit and in the interests of the countries of the South.

The significance of our action will depend upon our capacity to give appropriate answers to questions arising from the international situation of the 1990s and to prepare ourselves successfully to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Although it is true that the cold war has ended, as we all know, poverty persists; so do the environmental problems that are turning our earth into a desert. Greed to acquire armaments still hovers over the earth like a spectre.

Old ideological barriers have given way to new ones: new protectionist trade barriers that limit the access of our products to the markets of industrialized countries; technological barriers that isolate us from the knowledge we need to achieve development; and ethnic and religious barriers in whose name some continue to kill each other.

In Cartagena, we reaffirmed our will to continue the struggle against all those new barriers that impede our development, as was once the case with the wall that separated two seemingly irreconcilable political systems.

The problems that affect our people have an increasingly transnational nature and this fact, instead of leading us to accept a new era of intervention, must be faced with a firm will to cooperate with one another. The great challenge before us springs from the understanding that the problems that are bringing us together march at a much faster pace than the solutions we should already have agreed upon in order to resolve them.

International solidarity is not only the best answer: it is the only answer. We need each other because the solution to world problems can be obtained only through common actions. One such common action is that required to tackle the problem of drug trafficking.

Colombia has been the country most victimized by drug trafficking and the country which has combated it most successfully. The year 1995 will be known to history as the period of greatest achievements against the drug cartels. The Cali Cartel has been brought to justice, and the eradication of illegal crops has reached unprecedented levels. We have put 80 per cent of the cocaine market out of business. Coca paste prices are now 10 times less than they were, while consumer prices have risen significantly.

Whether these achievements will bring progress in this struggle or not will depend upon the responsibilities that the countries of the world assume. We cannot continue this unending debate over who is responsible, with each country blaming its neighbour for its own faults. We have to understand that a business which moves more than $500 billion per year cannot be combated by one country or one group of countries acting alone. We are all responsible. The moment is now or never.

President Bill Clinton was right when, in his statement last Sunday, he highlighted the fact that the blows we have inflicted upon drug traffickers have been the fruit of our common work. He is also right in pointing out the need to face squarely up to the problem of consumption and its relation to the increase in social criminality. Colombia associates itself with President Clinton's declaration of war against the laundering of money and assets flowing from the illicit drug market.

Colombia is convinced that the success of these actions will depends on the extent to which they are carried out at the multilateral level, and not only in our country. Money laundering, which is typically an international crime, involves actors and behaviours that must be prosecuted and punished in all countries, wherever they may arise. Let us punish financial systems that, wherever in the world they may be, whether by omission or commission, allow the pollution of their accounts with the profits flowing from drug trafficking.

Let us punish all industries worldwide that knowingly sell chemicals used as precursors for the industrial processing of drugs. Let us penalize all companies, wherever they may be, that facilitate the acquisition of durable or non-durable goods or that promote the smuggling of goods into producing countries to facilitate money laundering and to hide these infernal profits, as well as those real estate enterprises that serve the same despicable ends.

Let us thoroughly examine the actions of the gambling houses, casinos, and lotteries throughout the world that pander to the unholy marriage between gambling and drugs.

My country, which has paid such huge human and economic costs in this often lonely struggle, has been asking for the convening of a world conference against drugs that will combine together the unequivocal will of the producing, consuming and distributing countries in the common and firm resolve to mount an integrated attack on this scourge.

It is almost 10 years now since we subscribed to the Vienna Convention against Illegal Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the hope that it would serve as an instrument for the implementation of a strategy of this kind. It was certainly a great step forward. But we cannot declare ourselves fully satisfied: the trafficking and consumption of drugs have increasingly expanded to more countries, poisoning more youngsters everyday.

Colombia would feel that the memory of the thousands of victims of this long and cruel war would be redeemed if the world agreed to make a sincere and precise analysis of the need for effective international cooperation to overcome the most important problem affecting mankind at the end of this century: the problem of drugs.

The creation of the United Nations 50 years ago sowed the seeds of hope for mankind: hope for peace and progress, faith in peaceful mechanisms for the settlement of conflicts, and belief in multilateralism as we confront the most wrenching issues before humankind.

Today we have to rethink what we are, in order to know what we want to become. The Bible teaches us that without vision, the people perish. The task of the new United Nations system must be to regain that vision, so that we may continue to prevail as a civilization, as a democracy and as rational human beings.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

His Excellency Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Kučan (*spoke in Slovenian; English text furnished by the delegation*): I have the pleasure of adding the sincere congratulations and fresh hopes of the Republic of Slovenia to those already received by the United Nations on this occasion. We have the right to trust the United Nations and, at the same time, to expect much from it.

The United Nations has undoubtedly justified its establishment in its 50 years of existence. However, the goals defined in the Charter of the United Nations have not yet been realized. On the contrary, in the key area of its activity, the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations is burdened by an alarming lack of success. Let me mention only Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans, because this alone is example enough. Its lack of readiness or its inability to recognize the true aggressive nature of the war against this sovereign country, a Member of the United Nations, and its procrastination and inconsistency in dealing with the issue of succession in the former Yugoslavia were serious errors. These errors could not be redressed by later political, military, humanitarian and financial involvement, although this managed to mitigate to a commendable extent the consequences of violence against innocent civilian populations.

I wish to stress that the genuine effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security is of crucial importance for the future of the Organization. It must continually demonstrate its relevance, credibility, and legitimacy: it must confirm its capability. For the United Nations, every moment is the moment of truth, the moment to face itself.

The Organization is in its worst political and financial crisis to date. This seems to be a contradiction, since mankind expects ever more from the United Nations and has placed upon it increasingly heavy burdens for the maintenance and restoration of peace. Yet it is logical: under the weight of events the United Nations has not been reformed either organizationally, financially or psychologically. There is much truth in the thought that there is nothing wrong with the United Nations, but rather with its Members. The widely held definition of the United Nations is that it is the sum of its Members. This is true, but the United Nations is more than just that. If it were only the sum of its Member States, it would be similar to any other intergovernmental organization. But the United Nations is more. Through the Security Council it has at its disposal the attributes of State powers such as resources and arms. It can and must be the highest moral authority in the judgement of violations of the basic rules of international life, coexistence and human rights. From this point of view, the United Nations cannot be neutral. One of the conditions for the revitalization of the United Nations is whether it aspires to lay down moral standards in political and legal relations among nations. Such a role does not allow detachment regarding the worst threats to peace and cooperation, but rather demands moral engagement and commitment.

The moral credibility of the United Nations, the indisputable impression that it stands behind its principles, is the basis of the next major task the world expects of the United Nations: the implementation of preventive diplomacy. There is no one more suitable to engage in preventive diplomacy than the Secretary-General of a world Organization which is more than the sum of its Member States and more than the sum of the major Powers.

To become reconciled with ineffectiveness would mean abandoning the goals on which this Organization was founded. It would mean the self-abrogation of the United Nations. We must openly confront this danger. With all gravity, we must weigh the relationship between free will as a basic principle of the United Nations and the need for responsible conduct according to the principles stated in its Charter, a precondition for its effectiveness as well as for its reputation, authority and credibility. No sovereign country has been forced to join the United Nations. Membership is based on free choice, which presupposes an acceptance of the obligations and measures imposed by the founding principles of the United Nations. Whoever fails to respect these principles or acts in contradiction to them acts against the very essence of the Organization and can have no place in it. The door to membership must be open wide for all to enter if they wish, but it must also be open for the departure of those who work against the mission of the United Nations. Everyone must choose his own fate and accept responsibility for it. The principle of free will precludes indifference to, and lack of solidarity with, the common will and effort.

I hope that the Member States of the United Nations which have the greatest responsibility for the Organization have heard the expressions of concern at this session, that they have heard that preventive diplomacy and a policy of engagement by the United Nations must become a reality before emerging conflicts grow into acute crises.

Of course, responsibility for the future of the United Nations rests with all of us together. Slovenia has already presented its concrete proposals for the reform of the United Nations. We are a part — a small part — of this Organization. In it we have placed all our hopes, and we are fully prepared to carry our share of responsibility for its success, credibility, and effectiveness.

(spoke in English)

The people of Slovenia trust that the United Nations will live up to the challenges of our time and fulfil the hopes of the coming century.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Islam A. Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Islam A. Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

His Excellency Mr. Islam A. Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Karimov *(interpretation from Russian)*: I want to take this opportunity to dwell on a number of issues which, to our mind, are significant in the context of the problems being discussed at this Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly.

One of these urgent contemporary issues is that of regional security and stability. The seminar on security and cooperation in Central Asia held in Tashkent in September this year with the direct support of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was attended by representatives of 31 States and 6 authoritative international organizations. It reaffirmed that global security can be achieved through regional security; in other words, that the path to globalism lies through regionalism.

Achieving understanding among States in specific areas and regions, and especially in areas now called "hot spots", requires that we achieve peace throughout the world. This is of special importance for the Central Asian region, which possesses huge natural, mineral, raw material and strategic resources and which, more and more, is being turned into an arena for rivalry of geopolitical and economic interests, as well as for what I must call the ambitions of many States.

The continuing war in Afghanistan has actually begun to threaten peace and stability not only in Central Asia, but in the whole world. This war has already been going on for 17 years; it has brought immeasurable suffering to the Afghan people. This war is becoming a source of international terrorism, drug trafficking, and the proliferation of armaments, and is aggravating the already tense situation in neighbouring Tajikistan. We believe that the conflict in Afghanistan could be settled, first of all, by eliminating the interference of external forces. Such interference is the basic reason for the continuing war today in Afghanistan. We appeal once again to the Security Council to impose an embargo on the supply of arms to Afghanistan, irrespective of its source.

Afghanistan should be not the object of hostilities, but the object of peace and stability. Uzbekistan, as well as the whole Central Asian region, would like to see the implementation of the promising projects supported by many international institutions and companies and connected with construction of rail and transport communications through the territory of Afghanistan so that access for Central Asia to the Indian Ocean ports can become a reality.

These projects will help to involve millions of the Afghans in peaceful activities to create new, shorter communications as well as trade and economic ties, and to change, in principle, geopolitical realities in this particularly tense region of the world.

I feel it necessary to refer from this lofty rostrum to the ecological disaster connected with the drying-up of the Aral sea. This problem is acquiring a global character, and has a negative impact on the biosphere, the living conditions, the health and even the heredity of tens of millions of people.

Today it is absolutely clear that this problem cannot be solved without the support and assistance of international financial institutions and developed countries, with the United Nations playing the organizing role.

With regard to the need to reform United Nations structures and to improve its performance, it is now essential; first, to expand the membership of the Security Council by including as permanent members such States as Germany and Japan which today play an important role in world politics; secondly, to strengthen the powers of the Secretary General of the United Nations in order to ensure the effective implementation of United Nations decisions; and, thirdly, it is becoming increasingly clear that cooperation between the United Nations and international and regional organizations needs to be revitalized and United Nations regional structures need to be developed further in order to prevent and solve crises. Today the growing scale and volume of arms sales, especially in our region, are a cause of great concern.

Many countries do not even make a secret of the fact that arms sales have become for them one of the main and basic sources of foreign currency, and they pay no attention whatsoever to the question of who these arms will be aimed at tomorrow and what purposes they will be used for.

The situation in which the same interests are pursued through projects for selling nuclear technologies, even though they are accompanied by declarations of peaceful intentions, is of even greater concern. Uzbekistan advocates providing appropriate international guarantees on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the earliest possible conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

We cannot agree with the rhetoric now ringing out here and there which is designed to take us back to military and political confrontation and conflict between blocs. For us, isolation is very destructive. The only right path for us is integration into the world community, despite the fact that we see certain difficulties and shortcomings in this process.

Today the newly independent States on the post-Soviet space are in the process of laying the foundations of their national statehood and advancing towards democratic reform, for which they need the assistance and support of the world community to implement reforms and expedite their integration into international political, economic and financial structures. I mean not only material and financial assistance but also, and above all, the moral and political support we need for our sovereign and independent development. It is now of crucial importance for us to further maintain the consistency and irreversibility of reform, adherence to democratization and a free market economy, stability and sustainable development, and mutually beneficial and equal relations with all peace-loving states. This will enable us to secure the place we deserve in the world community.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Islam A. Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Wasmosy, President of the Republic of Paraguay

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Wasmosy, President of the Republic of Paraguay.

His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Wasmosy, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Wasmosy (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a privilege for me to represent my country, Paraguay, as President of the Republic, at this commemoration today of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations. It is also a great honour for me to be part of this historic moment in the life of the United Nations, since Paraguay was one of the founders of the Organization.

Paraguay has the same fervour and conviction today about the United Nations as it had when it signed the Charter, and it continues to support the Organization with a view to its pursuing its two main aims: the preservation and maintenance of peace in the world, and the construction of peace on the basis of the harmonious and balanced development of the Member States. Our firm belief in the ideals of the United Nations and our support are not shaken or destroyed by some failures which the United Nations may have suffered. We restate our conviction that this Organization is absolutely necessary in our world to carry out the two fundamental tasks the peoples of the United Nations undertook to accomplish after the butchery of the Second World War.

Paraguay solemnly pledges to continue to support the principles enshrined in the Charter and, in so doing, we give our full support to and have every confidence in the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Mr. President, you can be certain that Paraguay has honoured and will continue to honour its commitments with regard to the United Nations. Together, we have travelled a long road for 50 years and today we see with great satisfaction that the objectives for which this world Organization was established are being reached, although perhaps not as quickly as we would like.

Our growing experience, the increasing resolve of States to preserve peace, and the increasingly ardent desire of each and every State to make progress, to develop and to seek higher living standards for their peoples spur us on to strengthen this Organization, which stands at the head of a system that covers every human activity.

All States are duty-bound to support and contribute to the financing of the United Nations. Failure to lend the support it needs to be able to work towards its aims is inconceivable. States, large and small, have the same obligation to make available to the United Nations the means it needs to reach its goals. Paraguay is up-to-date with its obligations.

The Republic of Paraguay has been an enthusiastic and devoted participant when called on to act in various organs of the United Nations. We have also received since 1951 considerable technical cooperation, which we deeply appreciate, and we hope that it will continue since it is an important factor in the development of our countries.

Our Organization has played and continues to play a primary role in the world as a guiding light in questions of great importance in the life of nations, such as the monumental task of ensuring adherence to the principles of the protection of human rights, decolonization, support for democracy and freedom, the legal equality of States, the codification of international law — a shining example of which is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea — and many other principles that are now accepted pursuant to multilateral treaties.

At this time, Paraguay enjoys full democracy, with total freedom and respect for human rights. This political situation emerged after a long period of obscurantism, which, fortunately, was cast aside following free elections that brought to the presidency after almost 50 years a civilian who is committed to consolidating this democracy and to the ideals and principles of the national Constitution in force.

Paraguay accepts international law as part of its national legislation and recognizes international justice as the highest instance for the peaceful solution of conflicts. Thus, Paraguay has acted as mediator in the settlement of disputes and has often had recourse to international tribunals in regard to international conflicts and received judgements in its favour.

Paraguay, at the invitation of the President of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Professor Diogo Freitas do Amaral, and in keeping with its steadfast devotion to peace, has decided to make another contribution to ending the scourge of war and to cooperate in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

For those reasons, and inspired by the lofty ideals of the United Nations, I have the honour to announce to the Assembly my Government's decision to recognize as compulsory, in relation to any other State accepting the same obligation, the jurisdiction of the Court in all legal disputes, as set forth in Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Court's Statute.

The relevant declaration will be formalized and deposited in accordance with the provisions of Article 36, paragraph 4, of the Statute of the Court, once the parliamentary steps required by my country's Constitution have been complied with.

In conclusion, let me say that this decision to recognize mankind's highest Court is the result of prior consultation and has the blessing of my country's principal political entities. Paraguay wishes to renew its faith in the law as a part of the new stage in human civilization.

Thus, armed with the Charter, we will overcome our problems and reaffirm our principles, and, with imagination and courage, we will finally achieve the more just international society that was conceived 50 years ago by men and women who believed it worth while to struggle to attain freedom.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Wasmosy, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Highness Sheik Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Highness Sheik Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

His Highness Sheik Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, was escorted to the rostrum.

Sheik Al-Sabah: I open my remarks by offering to you all heartfelt greetings, coupled with my sincere wishes for the prosperity of mankind.

On this solemn occasion marking the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, I feel that the peoples of the world, despite their different persuasions, have come to a virtual consensus that this world body does indeed represent a real sanctuary to which they have recourse to resolve their disputes and address their concerns. This is especially true when small nations fall prey to threats by larger dictatorial regimes bent on devouring them.

I wish to take this occasion, on behalf of the people of Kuwait, to put on record our acknowledgement of the vital role played by the United Nations in backing my country in the face of aggression. At this point in time, I hope that the United Nations support will continue until the relevant Security Council resolutions are implemented in full. In this context, I wish to highlight the human tragedy of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners who remain held in Iraqi jails.

Global confidence in the United Nations system has been on the rise since it has become a beacon of hope for alleviating and redressing the human suffering caused by aggression and oppression in all their forms and manifestations. We trust that the Organization will become even more effective in confronting mankind's global problems in the coming century. Such a contribution would indeed consolidate the lofty human values of benevolence, cooperation and interdependence for the common benefit of all human beings who yearn for a peaceful and dignified life.

There is no doubt that the aspirations pinned on the United Nations will remain high. If anything, this is yet another testimony to the relevance of and confidence in this great institution. At the same time, we have to be realistic and recognize that the United Nations is not and cannot be a miracle worker. In order to appreciate the immense achievements of the United Nations and their wider implications, we have to make a fair and balanced review not only of its political performance but also of its delivery in the areas of development, culture, social affairs and health, to name but a few. Special mention should be made of the services and aid provided by the United Nations specialized agencies to the countries of the third world.

We value the input of all cultures in the evolution of the parameters of the world envisioned by the founders of the United Nations. Meanwhile, we do recognize our due share of the historical responsibility for fashioning a community in which the principles of tolerance, understanding and respect for the rule of law and international treaties reign supreme. This would lead to a state of human peace of mind free of the threats of hegemony, the insanity of bigotry and the fear generated by war and aggression.

I come here on behalf of Kuwait to express sentiments of gratitude, to extend congratulations to the United Nations and to reaffirm our commitment to the principles enshrined in its Charter.

We look forward to a future full of hope and peace, and we pray to Allah, the Almighty, to help mankind realize the human aspirations embodied by the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Amir of the State of Kuwait for his statement.

His Highness Sheik Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Joachim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Joachim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique.

His Excellency Mr. Joachim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Chissano: The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is a landmark in the history of humanity. We celebrate, first and foremost, the success of the United Nations in saving generations from the scourge of war. We celebrate the accession to independence of the countries and peoples under colonial domination. We celebrate our faith in the principles and moral values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As we celebrate this jubilee, we pay special tribute to the founding fathers of the United Nations. Our challenge for the next century is to strengthen the United Nations further in order to enable it to deal more efficiently and vigorously with issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security and to promote sustainable development, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Only these can ensure a better and safer world for all.

The reforms of the United Nations system are a logical consequence of the increase in the membership of the Organization and of the winds of democratization blowing across the world. The United Nations needs to update itself to meet this reality. This requires innovations, particularly in the composition and working methods of the Security Council to make it more representative and democratic, thus allowing greater participation on the part of developing countries in general, and of Africa in particular.

We are at the dawn of a new era. We have the responsibility of making it an era of peace, stability and sustainable development for humanity as a whole. Development is the twin sister of peace. There can be no sustainable development without lasting peace, nor can there be a lasting peace without sustainable development.

Development is a basic human right. Consequently, we have to adopt common policies towards people-centred development.

Those summits and conferences which we have convened over the past five years reflect our conscious and collective desire and determination to attain the most viable solutions to the problems facing humanity. It is our belief that the most important element in holding summits and conferences is the implementation of the decisions therefrom.

When looking at development as a global issue we have to bear in mind the specific conditions and needs of the developing countries and take into account the social and human dimension of development. Conditionalities of development aid and financing, particularly by the Bretton Woods institutions, must be based on this reality if we want to ensure progress in developing countries.

We in Mozambique have recently benefited from the assistance of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the international community at large in putting an end to a devastating war. We highly appreciate the role played by the United Nations in supervising and monitoring the implementation of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, which culminated in the holding of the first multi-party general elections, in October 1994.

Peace in Mozambique was made possible by the following fundamental factors: first, the outstanding political will demonstrated by the parties; secondly, the positive role played by all segments of society; thirdly, the spirit of tolerance and mutual accommodation; and fourthly, the significant role played by the international community. Our country considered itself to be an integral part of the United Nations operation as a Member fulfilling its obligation to work for the success of the Organization.

Our own experience in Mozambique underlines the need for the United Nations to bear in mind that peace-keeping forces operate on the basis of consent by the parties concerned. Therefore they must always act with impartiality and in accordance with their mandate. Furthermore, they must respect and abide by the principles of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference, with due regard for each country's specificities. National institutions must be respected and protected.

With peace today we look to the future with optimism and renewed hope. The unflinching will of the Mozambican people to consolidate peace and democracy must be complemented by the creation of adequate conditions for rebuilding the socio-economic fabric severely affected by 16 years of war. As a measure of post-conflict peace-building we would like to stress the vital role of the United Nations and the international community at large in assisting countries emerging from conflict situations, particularly in supporting programmes for the rehabilitation of their economies and social infrastructures.

In conclusion, I should like on behalf of the Mozambican people and Government to express our highest appreciation of the positive role played by the United Nations in international relations during the 50 years of its existence and to reiterate our firm commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Mozambique for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives.

His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Abdul Gayoom: On this historic occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I convey to you, Mr. President, and all Member States of the United Nations sincere greetings from the people of the Maldives.

Given only five minutes to speak, one has to be brief and focus on only a few of the most crucial issues that have a direct bearing on one's own country. Therefore, what I have to say today may be at variance with what other speakers have said, or will say, on this occasion.

For the Maldives, a small island nation, our top priorities are our security, our independence and the basic needs of our people.

Fifty years ago, the United Nations was created to serve all peoples — rich and poor alike; big and small on an equal footing — based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members. My question is this: has the United Nations been successful in the even-handed application of this principle and, more particularly, has the United Nations succeeded in ensuring the protection and security of small States?

Just a few weeks ago, a band of foreign mercenaries invaded another island nation, the Comoros, and toppled its legitimate Government. I did not hear of any United Nations action. In November 1988 heavily armed foreign terrorists attacked my own country and tried to do the same. We received no assistance from the United Nations to repel the attack. Following that traumatic experience, the Maldives raised the issue of the vulnerability of small States to external threats and foreign intervention, which led to the adoption of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

We do acknowledge what the United Nations did in the Middle East in 1956 and 1967, and in Kuwait in 1991. We want the United Nations to react with the same urgency, commitment and effectiveness to the threats that we small States are frequently exposed to. The security and protection of small States must be accepted as an integral part of international security and peace.

The coming into force of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries would contribute immensely to the strengthening of international security. Regrettably, however, though the Convention was adopted by the General Assembly in 1989, only nine Member States have so far ratified it. I therefore urge all Member States which have not done so to ratify the Convention as a matter of priority.

The latest scientific research indicates that the global temperature may increase by as much as 6° Fahrenheit by the year 2100 and that consequently the oceans may rise by as much as one metre or more during the next century. My people want to know what the United Nations will do to save the Maldives and other small island nations from being engulfed by the sea. Indeed, the small island nations are most susceptible to the dangers of environmental crises as well, especially those due to climate change and sea-level rise. Unless the industrialized countries drastically cut down the emission of greenhouse gases, with immediate effect, the small island States and other low-lying areas will face an environmental catastrophe of unprecedented proportions.

The achievements of the United Nations in the past 50 years have been many. Through its decolonization efforts, more than 100 independent nations have come into being. Apartheid has been dismantled. Human rights and good governance have acquired high priority. The rights of women have gained ascendancy worldwide. Measures relating to youth development and child welfare have become key components of national and international social programmes.

Despite these gains, the issues of the social and economic development of many countries have remained extremely critical. The evils of drug abuse and terrorism plague our lives. The unsustainable management of the world's natural resources and the rapid deterioration of the Earth's environment have become problems of global magnitude. It is imperative that the United Nations take timely action to save succeeding generations from the scourges not only of war, but of these new dangers as well.

We are about to enter a new millennium in circumstances vastly changed from those of the time when the United Nations was born. Today the world needs an Organization that will aim at a world of shared economic prosperity and national security and one in which communities can live in harmony with one another and with the environment.

The United Nations is here to stay. We owe it to the coming generations to keep the flame burning and light up humanity's path to a brighter future in a more equitable world.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Maldives for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Roberto Reina, President of the Republic of Honduras

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Roberto Reina, President of the Republic of Honduras.

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Roberto Reina, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Reina (*interpretation from Spanish*): The United Nations is completing 50 years of existence on the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, which means we have a twofold obligation: to think about both the work done by the Organization in that period and the challenges of the years ahead. Balancing the books and considering prospects are the obligatory tasks of this anniversary.

The world that emerged from the Second World War did not live up to the dreams of the victorious peoples, and it still has not done so. No sooner had the flames of combat been extinguished than that special sort of struggle known as the cold war began, dividing the planet into adversarial spheres of influence. The Organization was born between fear and hope. None the less, it was the best idea of modern times and the best option for the peace and prosperity of peoples.

The world body has continued to grow throughout these 50 long years. Today it is a great family of departments and agencies whose vast network of competences and activities covers mankind's most important focuses of concern. Its work in the field of development shows how gravely peace is affected by the separation between developed and developing countries and the persistent inequity in the distribution of wealth between the tightly knit circle of affluence and the large circle of marginalization and poverty.

The poor of the world have a right to expect this planetary forum to spectacularly light up the path to justice and well-being. At present, the way for States, particularly the poorest States, to follow that path is by making economic readjustments in order to find and perfect models selected for their correspondence with the material values of the industrialized societies. This paradigm is inadequate. No country in the world can speak of progress while the great majority of peoples suffer from hunger and thirst for justice, however different might be the abstract reality reflected by macroeconomic indicators.

We are urged to consider new propositions. But we are now searching for the human being in development, the spirit in the meshing of gears, a fellow man who stands here, now, and who cannot now or ever be represented by the gross national product or per capita income. What really matters is not the civilization of capital, but the culture that system can engender if it remembers that the tool is less important than the hand that moves it. This woman, this man and this child are the true centre of our concerns, and not a number lost in the vague dimension of surveys and averages.

The United Nations must help us find the humanism of our times. As if in a new Renaissance, we must erect a heretofore unseen concept of man on the shoulders of science and technology, a concept by which the importance of material things is found in their relationship with the higher levels of humanitarian conscience. This road begins by vanquishing poverty, defeating illegitimate power, breaking corruption and impunity and establishing a world order loved and sustained by all. There is no better definition of a future democracy.

In Central America we are working on a comprehensive agenda of development in which political, economical, social, cultural and environmental issues receive equal attention, given the multidimensional character of the human being. We started an alliance for sustained development, and we want the rest of the world to participate in order to exemplify a new understanding of the relations between the peoples of the United Nations.

My country, the Republic of Honduras, is pledged to carrying out a genuine moral revolution and a national convergence process leading to a Government by consensus. Thus, we shall enter the new century in a new way in order to bury for ever the vices and errors of the past. We are convinced that the United Nations, this alliance of the peoples of the world, will enter the second half of its first century with a renewed spirit of humanism, solidarity and full conviction that respect for the legitimate will of peoples is the sturdiest foundation for peace, that desideratum of the new United Nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Honduras for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Roberto Reina, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Havel: Allow me a few words about my vision of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

I am deeply convinced that the primeval foundations of the broad spectrum of cultures, spheres of civilization and worlds of religion which we represent here contain certain basic moral principles which are identical to them all and which offer a key to human coexistence on this Earth of ours. I am convinced that we all share certain most profound experiences with ourselves, with the miracle of our very existence and with the miracle of the universe of which we are a part. If the future of mankind is not to be jeopardized by conflicting spheres of civilization and culture, we have no alternative but to shift the ray of our attention from that which separates us to that which unites us. This is where I see the only possible source of a new spirit, of a new ethos of world cooperation, as well as of humanity's renewed responsibility for the world. This, too, is where I sense the only possible spiritual basis of any future meaningful existence of the United Nations.

So far, it seems to me, the United Nations has, above all, served States and their Governments in reaching various agreements, but also in their competing interests, rivalries and prestige. In my vision, the United Nations of the future would become more clearly an instrument serving all inhabitants of our planet, an instrument for pursuing their good life together. The point is not to expropriate any part of their internal identification with their own country, their people, their religious or cultural roots. The point is to forge a world in which everyone could be himself without being menaced by another, in which we would all feel that there are values which we all share and whose protection and nurturing are in the interest of us all. The form of a twenty-first century United Nations could be shaped precisely by this spirit, by this sense of responsibility.

I have a vision of the United Nations General Assembly one day resembling a parliament of the world.

I have a vision of the United Nations Security Council assuming additional tasks. One day, it might become the focal point for the operational decision-making of this world Organization on all basic issues that concern it. Its permanent members, their composition better balanced than now, should one day include the most populous and most influential countries of the world, representing different continents and spheres of civilization, indeed even certain integrated groups of States pursuing a joint foreign policy.

I have a vision of the United Nations one day establishing a permanent strike force capable of stopping aggressors, as well as a permanent peace-keeping force, with more of a policing role.

I have a vision of the United Nations of the twenty-first century dealing only with matters that no one else can deal with, and only with matters it can really affect. For quite a few of the issues it takes on today could probably be better dealt with by other global or regional organizations. All the more effectively and flexibly would the United Nations then deal with those issues that truly do pertain to it. This is connected with another major topic: streamlining the United Nations bureaucracy. I believe that the simpler its structure and the more independent and responsible its staff, the less it would actually cost us all. And, indeed, who should pay for it? Ideally, difficult though it is to imagine today, all citizens of this planet might one day contribute, as directly as possible, some minuscule portion of their income to make it quite obvious that this is an Organization humankind established for itself rather than strictly the domain of professional diplomats serving various Governments.

These few sentences should make it clear that my vision of the United Nations in the next century is not one of a monstrous superstate, a burden to all, but on the contrary, a vision of a flexible and workmanlike instrument of service to all, infused by a common will to benefit mankind as a whole.

Let me sum up. Mine is a vision of a United Nations consisting not, as happens so frequently today, of divided nations and in particular of divided States, but of united people belonging to a world in jeopardy which can be saved only by uniting all human forces.

The President: I thank the President of the Czech Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Hungary

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Hungary.

His Excellency Mr. Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Hungary, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Göncz: It is an honour and privilege for me to participate in this Commemorative Meeting.

During the 50 years of its existence, the United Nations has upheld the noble ideals and values embodied in the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other important United Nations instruments. These ideals and values are even now a major driving force behind the momentous changes in our contemporary world.

We should not forget that the strengths and weaknesses or the accomplishments and failures of the Organization are our common responsibility. In this respect, the vision of the founding fathers "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" remains to be pursued vigorously for all of us.

For so many in the world, the United Nations is a beacon of hope and help. We, ourselves, felt this when, in 1956, Hungarians in our revolution and national-freedom fight, including myself, took courage from the distant but clear voice of solidarity coming from this very Hall. We remain deeply grateful for that. The continued attention of the United Nations was instrumental in the improvement of our fate, including that of the prisoners of conscience.

Mr. Silpa-Archa (Prime Minister of Thailand), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

Small countries, like Hungary, sought and found in the United Nations a forum where they could articulate and defend their interests and act in unison with all nations. Thus they could contribute to the shaping of a better future. We have learned — maybe well before others — that by upholding universal values, supporting the ideals set forth in the Charter 50 years ago and acting for their practical implementation, we not only do not lose our specific identity but also enrich the precious political heritage of mankind.

We live in a time of opportunities, and the United Nations is at a crossroads. Only a reformed United Nations can be a catalyst in our endeavours to create a safe and secure world, where freedom, democracy and respect for human rights flourish. We should redouble our efforts to revitalize the United Nations. To this effect, there can be no delay in restructuring and streamlining the costly bureaucracy of the United Nations system. We have to rationalize the work of the General Assembly. Enlargement of the Security Council, along with enhancement of its effectiveness, is more than necessary. Financial reform of the United Nations is a must.

The time has come for a revitalized multilateral mentality to meet effectively and firmly the challenge of the new global and interconnected threats of resurgent nationalism and ethnic strife, international terrorism, illicit drug-trafficking, the smuggling of nuclear materials, the deliberate degradation of the global environment and poverty.

By the same token, international protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms — including minority rights — sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the promotion of prosperity should be high priorities for us well into the next century.

It is in this connection that I should like to pay tribute in particular to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Atomic Energy Agency as shining examples of multilateral thinking at its best.

At this important juncture of history, our task is to develop and strengthen a genuinely worldwide constituency for the United Nations. We can do this only if we make every effort to involve the young generations, whose confidence must be won through a renewed philosophy of multilateral cooperation. I am confident that for generations to come the promotion and protection of multi-ethnicity, diversity, tolerance and respect for human dignity will be the major feature what is expected of the United Nations.

The next era of the United Nations is being shaped today by our ideas and actions. I am profoundly convinced that our common wisdom, courage and determination will make the United Nations indeed worthy of the heritage given to us by our forefathers, who laid the foundation of this truly unique Organization 50 years ago.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Hungary for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Hungary, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, President of the Republic of Chile

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, President of the Republic of Chile.

His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, President of the Republic of Chile, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Frei Ruiz-Tagle *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I am honoured to bring to the General Assembly a message from the Government and people of Chile on the occasion of this celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The preservation of humanity requires our gratitude, and today I reflect upon all those women and men who have contributed to the development of the United Nations. I also pay homage to all the anonymous heroes — civilians and unknown solders — who gave their lives for peace and development.

To respond to global changes the United Nations has truly had to explore a vast array of fields of knowledge and to resolve myriad controversies between nations and peoples. The United Nations has strengthened international law in a wide variety of areas. It has helped to prevent the spread of wars, it has contributed to the settlement of disputes between North and South, and it has played a key role in the process of decolonization in Asia and Africa.

It has also strengthened international cooperation. It has fostered the creation of an open framework for trade, investment, the transfer of technology and environmental protection and has created an opportunity for links between nations with regard to debt and the financing of development.

The United Nations has made an extraordinary contribution to the promotion and preservation of human rights and, thereby, to the theory and practice of democracy. This universal consolidation of the creed of human rights is truly humanity's greatest contribution to the twentieth century and its most precious gift to future generations.

Is it not perhaps time to suggest new tasks for the United Nations? I pose this as a question, with the unpretentiousness of a young, emerging nation.

In the area of peace, I believe that the Organization should strengthen its capabilities in preventive diplomacy, implement a complete ban on nuclear testing — we are ready to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as we do not want continued nuclear testing, which is a danger to our countries and to people everywhere — and it should foster cooperation as a means of bolstering global peace.

In international law, the United Nations can encourage progress by ensuring regulatory refinements in areas critical to social and economic progress: technology, transportation, information, humanitarian aid, human rights and peace-keeping operations.

In the area of development and the eradication of poverty in the world, the fact that one fifth of the world's population lives in dire poverty demands an urgent response at the national and global levels. The conditions faced by women, children, vulnerable sectors of the population and migrant workers; the new problems of environmental deterioration; drug trafficking and consumption; the high rates of mortality and pandemic diseases; the different forms of social ostracism and exclusion — these things make it morally and politically imperative to establish new priorities for the agenda of the United Nations.

Up to now the United Nations has been the setting for intergovernmental agreement. It is now time to begin the long march towards the consolidation of ties between the peoples and groups of different societies. The exchange of cultural values in civil society can provide an important source of support for the elimination of apprehensions, racism and prejudice against human conditions of all types. Furthermore, contacts between people and the exchange of goods and services in certain areas of the world underpin different forms of political and economic integration spiritually and materially.

We believe that the future of the United Nations must be marked by emphasis on human development, preservation of the environment and the consolidation of peace. This will require adjustment of the process of reforming the Organization towards these objectives. Chile is fully prepared to contribute to the implementation of these worthy goals, in keeping with its tradition of democracy and solidarity.

The coming millennium should be a time for the emergence of a world which expresses its broadest diversity, with peoples living in peaceful unity and feeling at home. Will we be capable of making the world a true home for mankind? That is the noble task before us all, and it is up to us to achieve this goal in the third millennium.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Chile for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, President of the Republic of Chile, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saúl Menem, President of the Argentine Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saúl Menem, President of the Argentine Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saúl Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Menem (*interpretation from Spanish*): Fifty years have elapsed since the unspeakable pain and suffering of a terrible war gave rise to the United Nations. Today, we are celebrating much more than an anniversary. We evoke the dream, the vision, the fears and also the courage of a few men who, despite the proximity of horror, dared to imagine a space for the preservation of international peace and security, international cooperation, the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the economic and social progress of peoples. This generation — our generation — owes the founding fathers of the United Nations its deepest gratitude.

I convey the message of a people which, from the south of the Americas, has accompanied the United Nations since its earliest years. I am the bearer of a new commitment, a renewed promise from Argentina, filled with hope and free from speculation. Our participation in peace-keeping operations and observation and humanitarian-assistance missions proves that Argentines have faith in multilateralism and in our Organization.

We note with genuine satisfaction that the Organization is deeply committed to solving the major international conflicts, but also to responding to humanitarian emergencies and tirelessly promoting respect and tolerance. Almost imperceptibly, the voices which until recently foretold the decline of multilateralism are fading away. The United Nations has proven them categorically wrong by taking the lead in the creation of new patterns of international social coexistence.

These positive developments are not, however, the only aspects of the reality that we must confront. The law of violence is still imposed in more areas of the planet than we should like to admit. Hunger, helplessness and intolerance afflict many thousands, demanding solutions that are not always forthcoming. This constantly reminds us of the need to strengthen our efforts, stimulate our imagination and increase the material resources available to the Organization in order to find a response to these predicaments that should be as immediate as it is unified.

A few days ago, from this very rostrum, His Holiness Pope John Paul II rightly reaffirmed that our task consists not merely of serving by

> "effective mediation for the resolution of conflicts, but also by fostering ... concrete initiatives of solidarity". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 5)*

In this context, I have created the White Helmets Commission with the aim of mobilizing resources, by means of a volunteer system, to support the United Nations in its activities in the fields of emergency humanitarian assistance and the promotion of a gradual transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. We have made this specific contribution in the field of development because we know that the scope of the United Nations is not and cannot be restricted to the great security issues on the daily agenda of the Security Council, no matter how urgent and pressing those issues may be.

For an organization like the United Nations, half a century of existence may seem like a long time. From its inception to the present, international circumstances have changed dramatically, from the emergence of nuclear weapons through the decolonization process to the beginning and the end of the cold war. In the presence of such an evolving and dynamic reality, questions and doubts as to the functioning of the Organization and the possible reform of its institutions and machinery begin to arise. The momentum towards reform, which represents the impulse for change and progress, must in this case be managed on a realistic and practical basis so as not to alter the delicate balance achieved after such painstaking work in San Francisco 50 years ago.

Nowadays a new atmosphere prevails, conducive to the attainment of a United Nations capable of ensuring peace and active in the promotion of economic and social progress. This new scenario will also enable us to make strides in the multilateral consideration of such new threats to peace and security as international terrorism, drug trafficking and illicit arms transfers. Because of their complexity and persistence, all these threats require coordinated and global action, which is possible only through the United Nations. The opportunity is here and now and we must make the most of it. We have a simple choice to make: either we reaffirm and confirm by deed our commitment to the United Nations or we marginalize and weaken it, thereby opening the door to past scenarios which should not be reenacted.

I can imagine a new generation gathered right here in 50 years' time, evaluating our actions. Let us begin now, through our efforts in the framework of the United Nations, to give specific answers to the questions that our children will undoubtedly raise. This is an appointment with history that we cannot and must not avoid.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Argentine Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saúl Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Rakhmonov (*interpretation from Russian*): The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the half-century that has elapsed since the end of the Second World War are historically linked to each other. The fight against the forces of evil ended with a triumphant victory, having encompassed countries with no regard to their political system or ideology. We can be proud that Tajikistan's warriors and envoys were part of those national forces that fought for this victory and formed the United Nations.

Designed to help States resolve disputes in a peaceful manner, the United Nations today faces a new challenge: to make wider use of preventive diplomacy for those purposes. We believe that the peacemaking potential of the United Nations can be coupled with its cooperation with regional organizations, primarily in deterring, confining and settling armed conflicts and in countering terrorism and radical manifestations of fundamentalism of various kinds. We believe that the best prospects for defending our national interests lie in cooperation with the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations.

This is the trend that characterizes the inter-Tajik talks today, and it is within this framework that they are taking place. I am sure that our efforts to this end would be more fruitful were it not for the remaining tension in neighbouring Afghanistan. The trend towards escalation of the conflict there not only threatens our country's security, but bears the destructive impulses of a global crisis. We call upon the international community to promote the earliest return of peace to this long-suffering land. Overcoming the Afghan crisis requires not only the constructive participation of States in the region, but also effective action by the United Nations.

The problem of the economic development of young Member States is closely linked to issues of international security. We believe that the remaining discriminatory restrictions in world economy and trade, as well as the practice of conditional financial and economic assistance to countries with transitional economies clearly do not serve the purposes of achieving universal security. The development by specialized agencies and by international banking and financial organizations of a comprehensive plan supporting reforms in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) during the transition period would, in our opinion, significantly expedite the integration of these States into the world economy.

The turbulent development of today's world is pushing the United Nations in the direction of reinterpreting quite a few of its concepts, objectives and tasks. In this regard, we are hopeful that the trend of recent years towards enforcement measures as part of peace-keeping operations conducted under United Nations auspices will not gain any further momentum. While advocating stronger United Nations positions in ensuring peace and stability, including in our region, we believe the requirements of security standards should be invariable.

On its fiftieth anniversary, the United Nations has every opportunity to find effective answers to questions posed by qualitative changes in the world situation. One such answer is the streamlining of the United Nations itself, taking today's realities into account. We see the strategy of partnership in the twenty-first century as one based on underlying common interests which will help build trust and extend the borders of peace and prosperity for years to come.

Five decades are a short moment from the perspective of history. And they are a moment as beautiful as the very idea of peace and cooperation that lies at the foundation of the United Nations. The festive atmosphere within these walls today should not hide the harsh reality of day-to-day life. We must properly pass the United Nations heritage to the next generation with confidence and with hope for a better future.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Tajikistan for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, President of the Republic of Burundi

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, President of the Republic of Burundi.

His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Ntibantunganya (*interpretation from French*): Today, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I should like to begin by paying a well-deserved tribute to all the founders of our Organization and by commending the courage and dedication of all the Secretaries-General who have presided over the Organization. They all worked in a tumultuous world, but their actions have been able to change the face of that world, especially through decolonization, the settlement of a number of regional conflicts and the emergence of a process of democratization in various political systems. To be sure, many alarming problems remain, especially with the continuation of poverty and major displacements of population owing to crises which have caused upheaval in certain countries.

We in the region of the Great Lakes know this well. Millions of refugees there remind the world that the socio-political crisis which has stricken the region must be quickly resolved so as to avoid the total catastrophe that some have been fearing for several months now, as political, military and economic interests complicate the issue. The solution we desire cannot be expected only from the international community. We, the sons and daughters of this region, must bend our efforts and our determination, and do everything possible, to correct the heritage of the past without being confused by it.

We must build a present which is not based on revenge for the past. We should also avoid having our future compromised by selfishness and by the promotion of narrow interests. The African peoples of the Great Lakes region have a right to peace, and we, their leaders, must give it to them. There is a great deal at stake, and we cannot risk missing this opportunity.

In Burundi, we have just experienced two years of crisis since the vile assassination of the first democratically elected Head of State in our history. Since then, given a past marked by indescribable political violence, my country has become a concern not only to its neighbours in Africa but also to the entire international community. How could it be otherwise when we know that the various crises which have stricken Burundi have always posed serious security, environmental, and even social and political problems for our neighbours. All of this is the result of a great deal of social, ethnic and political interference that has marked our border populations.

Like our neighbouring countries, the international community has been afraid that Burundi might explode and meet the same fate as that which neighbouring Rwanda did in 1994. There has already been a clash of arms, but if everyone — that is, we in Burundi, our neighbours and the international community — shows the necessary determination, the danger might be averted.

To my compatriots I say "no" to the bloody rivalry which kills, rapes, destroys, ravages, pillages and sets fire. I say "no" to the denial of the rights of others for any reason. I say "no" to intolerance, and to disobedience to authority and to the public order established by consent of the people.

On the other hand, I say "yes" to mutual trust, to security for all and to a common and shared peace. I say "yes" to freedom, to respect for individual rights and to progress for all.

To achieve this, only one condition must be met: the various Burundian military and political protagonists must guarantee peace to each other and to all the people of Burundi. Once security is assured, the national debate can proceed in full serenity and lead Burundi to equip itself with new instruments of governance consistent with universally recognized democratic principles and the inherent realities of the country.

In so doing, we expect from our neighbours and from the international community the following. First, to put an end, once and for all, to the disorderly flow of arms that circulate in the subregion and serve extremists of all kinds. Secondly, to monitor and block the routes used for entry and operations by the bands, militias and armed groups that are killing, pillaging and setting fires in virtually all parts of my country. Thirdly, to locate and destroy the media that are spreading hatred and death, such as "Radio Démocratie", and to hunt down both the organizers and those behind them. And fourthly, to help Burundi in its programme of moral and physical reconstruction, especially in the legal and educational spheres and in the resettlement and reintegration of displaced persons, repatriates and refugees, together with relaunching the economic and social development of the country.

Special emphasis must be placed in the immediate future on the work of the International Commission of Inquiry, which should quickly begin its work and shed light on the circumstances in which President Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated on 21 October 1993, and on the situation that prevailed immediately after his assassination, in particular during the subsequent inter-ethnic massacres.

The United Nations cannot effectively assist our countries unless it adapts to the requirements of today's world. Peace in the world is still endangered by growing poverty, which is evidently the gravest threat to peace in the years to come. Moreover, the exclusion of a major portion of humankind from the most influential bodies of the United Nations gives the impression of a world that is frozen in time, whereas important changes have taken place over the past 50 years. We must transform and democratize international relations as a whole. Today, the world and its citizens demand equality, fraternity and shared development.

The Acting President: I thank the President of the Republic of Burundi for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency General Idriss Deby, President of the Republic of Chad

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency General Idriss Deby, President of the Republic of Chad.

His Excellency General Idriss Deby, President of the Republic of Chad, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Deby (*interpretation from French*): The ceremony we have been attending for two days now is a special occasion, because it marks an important turning point for our Organization. Indeed, a half-century ago, immediately following the war, some 50 nations laid the foundations for a system of society turned resolutely towards freedom, peace, collective security, and economic and social well-being. Today these aspirations remain topical and deserve the support of all. Chad, for its part, solemnly reaffirms its full commitment to these noble ideals and its determination to deploy every effort for their implementation.

While it is true that the world, over the years, has seen many upheavals and often-deadly conflicts that have resulted in sometimes severe criticism of our Organization, we must acknowledge that in many cases the United Nations has achieved substantial results and has spared humanity the worst of catastrophes.

The President returned to the Chair.

It has played a decisive role in such varied areas as decolonization, the codification of the rules of international law, and the maintenance and restoration of peace. Our Organization has also endeavoured to face the major challenges of the end of this century, among them the protection of the environment and issues pertaining to population and sustainable development. Therefore the United Nations, in our view, remains an irreplaceable instrument for solving the problems that preoccupy our world.

Despite the outstanding efforts made by our Organization, there remain causes for concern. This is true in particular for such important initiatives as international development strategies and the establishment of a new international economic order, which have gone unheeded. The same applies to the disarmament process, certain aspects of which provoke serious worries.

Conflicts continue to ravage certain parts of the world, while hunger, extreme poverty and major endemic diseases are far from being eradicated from the face of the Earth. Many dangers, such as terrorism, drug trafficking and intolerance of all kinds, are threatening the very foundations of our society.

The need to adapt the United Nations to a changing world is evident, as has been made clear by the many speakers here who have quite rightly supported a restructuring of its various bodies so that the Organization can meet the expectations of nations today. Its ever-increasing activities must be accompanied by true political will and commensurate financial support in order to make it an effective tool in the service of peace, solidarity and international cooperation.

Since December 1990, Chad has been going through a most enriching democratic process, thereby putting an end to a long and dark period of implacable dictatorship. The enjoyment of freedoms today is a tangible reality. Political parties, trade unions, syndicates, associations for the defence of human rights, the press and many other groups are carrying out their missions without hindrance and in complete independence. But apprenticeship to democracy is no easy task.

Through lack of democratic culture, some political figures in Chad have indulged without restraint in demagogy, exaggerated statements and manoeuvres of all kinds, thus creating obstacles to the normal development of our democratic process, so much so that today Chad is one of the few countries in French-speaking Africa not to have organized pluralist elections. The Government, through my voice, undertakes to shoulder its full responsibilities in order to bring the democratic process to completion.

We take this opportunity to appeal urgently, from this rostrum, to friendly countries and to all international bodies to support our efforts to provide our country with permanent democratic institutions. To be sure, a great deal has been accomplished already with their help, and for this I should like to thank them here. But the main task remains, and it is for this purpose that I ask once again for their valuable assistance. I want them to know how grateful the people of Chad will be.

In the same vein, I should like to reiterate, on behalf of the people and Government of Chad and on my own behalf, our gratitude to the United Nations for the crucial support given to our country both for its reconstruction and for the definitive settlement of the dispute over the Aozou Strip.

That support remains essential for us. Indeed, Aozou and the entire northern part of Chad continue to suffer from the consequences of war and from the existence of mines of all types, neither the quantity nor the location of which are known.

We therefore need the help and expertise of the United Nations in mine-clearing in order to rid our land of this terrible danger.

Similarly, my Government calls on the Organization to assist the countries of the Sahel to halt the proliferation of the weapons of war in that region.

Long live the United Nations; may it hand down from generation to generation its ideals of peace, justice and solidarity for the development of nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Chad for his statement.

His Excellency General Idriss Deby, President of the Republic of Chad, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mahamane Ousmane, President of the Republic of Niger

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mahamane Ousmane, President of the Republic of Niger.

His Excellency Mr. Mahamane Ousmane, President of the Republic of Niger, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Mahamane (*interpretation from French*): Twenty-fourth October 1945 to 24 October 1995: it has been 50 years since the United Nations was established at San Francisco and 50 years that it has been working tirelessly to build and consolidate a better world, a world of justice, peace, progress and universal harmony.

As I convey to this Assembly the warmest greetings of the people of Niger, I have the pleasure to reaffirm solemnly and forcefully Niger's unyielding allegiance to the United Nations, and its determination to continue forever to respect scrupulously the noble principles and ideals of the Charter.

As we all know, the paramount reasons for the existence of the United Nations are the maintenance of international peace and security and thus the prevention of all conflicts that could degenerate into war; the promotion and protection of human rights; the development and strengthening of international cooperation; and the struggle for the economic and social progress of mankind.

Whatever its detractors may say, and despite the many obstacles that impede its functioning, we must acknowledge that the United Nations has been at the root of striking qualitative changes on the international scene. It has been at the centre of the accession to independence of many hundreds of millions of people. In the sphere of peace-keeping, it has somehow managed to prevent the repetition of conflicts just as devastating and deadly as the war that brought it into being. It continues to be the best framework for multidirectional thought and action towards a common approach to the ills that beset mankind, including hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty and the deterioration of the environment.

We therefore offer due thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and through him to all the men and women who continue to sustain the rich, noble, proud and legitimate hopes of the peoples of the United Nations. The United Nations must continue and complete its quest for universality; it must truly be a place where all the peoples of the world can meet and consolidate their efforts. Whatever qualifications or claims some among us may put forward, we must courageously acknowledge the intangible realities of the world. Only thus can we achieve universal peace.

We are pleased by the significant progress towards peace in the Middle East and in Palestine, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other parts of the world. These are the result in large part of steady efforts by the United Nations, and we encourage the Organization to continue so that peace may be restored forever in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia and everywhere else where it has been breached or where it is threatened, as in Jammu and Kashmir and in Nagorny Karabakh.

Similarly, to encourage this movement towards peace, the United Nations must continue to speak out and act throughout the world against the injustice faced by millions whose fundamental rights are very often harshly violated or totally ignored.

To remain the conscience of the international community and to be a moral force that can regulate the behaviour of all States, the United Nations must continue its work towards general and complete disarmament in order to ensure equal security for all. It must become more open and more democratic, which requires an overhaul of the Charter, *inter alia* to ensure more equitable representation of its Members in the Security Council.

Finally, and above all, the United Nations must be more vigorous and resolute in the struggle to eliminate the destitution and poverty that buffet entire regions of the world, the perpetuation of which is one of the greatest of threats to peace. In that connection, the situation in Africa, that great continent full of resources and vitality, deserves the full attention of the international community. In the light of these urgent priorities, we must lend strong support to the programme set out by the Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" and in its indispensable complement "An Agenda for Development", in order to breathe new, more hopeful dynamism into the United Nations.

In my view, these are the requirements of the day. This is the generous vision of tomorrow's world that we must offer to the peoples we represent as we strive towards the ideals set out by the signatories of the San Francisco Charter.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the President of the Republic of Niger for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Mahamane Ousmane, President of the Republic of Niger, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon.

His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Biya (*interpretation from French*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at a time that I do not hesitate to describe as historic. Let me also convey my cordial greetings to all the dignitaries present here, and especially to the many Heads of State and Heads of Government.

May I also be permitted to express my sincere and fraternal appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the unceasing efforts he has made in the service of our Organization.

Cameroon of course rejoices, as do all other Member States, at the opportunity to take part today in the ceremonies that mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I am all the happier to be here at this great encounter, since my country was a pupil of the United Nations. My compatriots, I can affirm, have not forgotten the primary role played by the United Nations in Cameroon's accession to national and international sovereignty.

For us Africans, the United Nations is the expression of a collective will that is at the service of peace, of human dignity and solidarity among peoples. Created in the wake of one of the most harrowing conflicts in the history of mankind, in the last 50 years the United Nations has made an inestimable contribution to the defence of peace. In working for disarmament and encouraging negotiations, it has taken preventive action to ward off possible future conflicts.

And when, regrettably, weapons were used, the United Nations offered its good offices. It placed itself between the parties, and the soldiers of peace have often paid a heavy price in the cause of international security.

We must also emphasize the action undertaken by the United Nations in defence of the rights of the human person, particularly in third-world countries. In this connection, the United Nations contribution to the progressive disappearance of colonialism and the end of apartheid is well known to all.

If we are to rejoice in the opportunity of peoples to decide their own fate we must not forget that the flourishing of the human person requires first the exercise of other rights, especially the right to health and to education. The work done in this respect by the United Nations specialized agencies is irreplaceable.

Far be it from me to omit mention of the right to development, without which our achievements would be mere illusion. It is, in essence, only the other side of the coin, which is the duty of solidarity, the imperative need for which was recognized by the United Nations. All the problems of the third world — economic crisis, the debt burden, the inequality of terms of trade and so on — can be resolved only by joint action between the industrialized and developing countries.

In truth, what we are talking about is a "contract of solidarity", where each party can benefit. It would undoubtedly be appropriate to add to this duty of solidarity, which is inscribed in the texts, a "supplement of soul" or heart, which might give some hope to hundreds of millions of people. The peoples of the third world would undoubtedly see this as a key contribution to that new, fairer world order for which they yearn.

On the eve of the third millennium, to what more exalting task could the United Nations devote itself?

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank the President of the Republic of Cameroon for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I should like at this moment to remind all delegations and all Members of the five-minute limit.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Taha M. Marouf, Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Taha Marouf, Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq.

His Excellency Mr. Taha M. Marouf, Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Marouf *(interpretation from Arabic)*: During the past 50 years of its life, the United Nations has achieved memorable successes. It has succeeded in eradicating colonialism, in assisting liberation movements and in laying the foundations of international law. Based upon a comprehensive concept of security, it has tried hard to strike a balance among the various components of security in the political, economic and social fields.

On the other hand, the cold war situation, whose origins coincided with the birth of the Organization, cast its shadow on the United Nations and its activities. The two super-Powers sought to adapt the working methods of the Organization in such a manner as to ensure that neither of the two would lose the elements of power to the advantage of the other. This was achieved at the expense of the principles of the Charter and the interests of the great majority of the Members of the international Organization. The era of the cold war also witnessed the eruption of many wars, the acceleration of the arms race and the regression of prospects for the achievement of the economic and social objectives of the Organization, including specifically the objective of comprehensive development, thus contributing to the widening of the gap between rich and poor nations and to the creation of new hotbeds of political instability.

With the end of the cold war, all the grandiose hopes for a new era of peace, development and democratic international relations have had to give way to an emergent unipolarism, whose five years of existence have witnessed many armed conflicts, both on the international and the domestic levels. There began attempts to dismantle States in the name of freedom of choice. In the economic field, the battle of contending interests is being fought with increasing intensity so as to secure the concentration of wealth in the hands of the dominant Powers, thus putting an end to the economic advancement of certain developing countries that have charted for themselves a balanced course of development and progress. In the social field, attempts have been made to steer the course of joint international action towards ensuring the predominance of the values and principles of a certain cultural tradition at the expense of the cultural concepts and values of other nations. The dangers that threaten the environment are still there. The question of disarmament continues to be dealt with in consonance with the priorities of the Powers that possess nuclear weapons and those that have passed the threshold of nuclear armament.

Within the United Nations, unipolarism has spawned types of behaviour characterized by selectivity, double standards and putting the mechanisms of the international Organization at the service of narrow self-interest. This has led, among many other things, to a hasty application of the measures provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter, such as sanctions and the use of armed force. Sanctions have been applied on the basis of an extreme interpretation, with the result that they have inflicted the most grievous harm on the civilian populations in the targeted countries and have deprived those people of their basic human rights including, in particular, their right to nutrition, medication, education, work and development, as was the case with Iraq, where the comprehensive sanctions imposed for over five years now have resulted in the death of thousands of children, women and the elderly due to lack of food and medication.

These negative developments should not weaken our resolve. Now that we can diagnose the ailment, we have to be quick with the remedy. We should begin by activating the democratic process in the work of the United Nations. We should seek to reinforce the United Nations mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes and promote judicial remedies for such settlements. We should reform the Security Council and its working methods in order to enable the Security Council to respond to the interests of the overwhelming majority of Member States. We should lay down such rules and principles as would preclude the use of measures set forth in Chapter VII for serving purposes that have nothing to do with the objectives of the Charter.

We should also promote the role of the United Nations in the economic sphere with a view to creating balanced international economic relations based on the principles of justice, equity and interdependence in coping with the requirements of development.

Finally, we should act with full speed in all areas concerning disarmament while seeing to it that the outcome of our endeavours will serve the interests of all rather than the interests of some.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Taha M. Marouf, Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Abdourabou Mansour Hadi, Vice-President of the Republic of Yemen

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdourabou Mansour Hadi, Vice-President of the Republic of Yemen.

His Excellency Mr. Abdourabou Mansour Hadi, Vice-President of Yemen, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Hadi *(interpretation from Arabic)*: On behalf of the delegation of Yemen, allow me to express our sincere congratulations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I should add to those congratulations the acknowledgment of the Government and people of Yemen and my own personal appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his untiring work in managing the Organization's affairs and raising its standards in the service of all mankind.

It is also a source of great pleasure to me and pride that I have been given the honour of participating in this special commemorative meeting. I should like to express to you the support of the Republic of Yemen for the Secretary-General's efforts in the area of maintaining international peace and security and to underscore the importance we attach to the concepts contained in An Agenda for Peace and in the Agenda for Development.

Despite the challenges and difficulties facing the Organization as it discharges its functions and reaffirms its character, the last five decades have yielded important historic achievements. These achievements have helped us to arrive at the present stage in forming a collective future vision.

The United Nations has contributed considerable efforts to our endeavours to achieve the purposes and uphold the principles which are the very foundations of the Organization. It has scored outstanding successes on a global scale in the field of peace-keeping, security and economic and social development.

Its greatest achievement is, perhaps, that it has spared mankind the horrors of a third world war. The Organization has also contributed to the liberation of nations, the raising of mankind's standard of living and the affirmation of the human right to a free and dignified life.

Yemen found in the noble purposes of the Charter one of its worthy objectives and it became a Member on 30 September 1947. At the time, the Yemeni people were languishing under the oppressive rule of the Imams and the yoke of colonialism. The United Nations stood by our people in their struggle to gain their independence and freedom from the burden of colonialism in the southern part of the country. Similarly, the Yemeni people will never forget the great efforts made on their behalf by the United Nations with a view to mitigating the suffering they had to endure as a result of the separatist attempt, nor will we forget the humanitarian assistance given to the affected areas in Yemen. The United Nations is still contributing to the development process of our people in different fields with the aim of achieving the desired development goals within the framework of democracy, pluralism, freedom of the press and respect for human rights.

Yemen stresses the importance of reforming the United Nations which should extend to restructuring both the main bodies and principal organs in such a way as to meet the needs of Member States in line with recent international developments and to make certain that it will be able to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Yemen therefore supports the drive towards renewal, revitalization and the shedding of the negative attitudes of the past and the stumbling blocks of the present in a sustained movement to refashion international relations and make them consistent with global trends which call for democracy, development and respect for human rights.

It is time for us all to realize that concern with human development must represent a qualitative shift in the interests of the international community. The North should no longer monopolize prosperity and the South must not be left to face poverty alone. The gap between the varying standards of living must be narrowed if collective security is not to remain diminished in scope and unstable in the shadow of the luxury of the few and the misery of the majority. Since the dawn of civilization, the goal of humanity has been world peace. While many steps have been taken towards the achievement of that goal, the road ahead is still long. Social justice remains the optimum path towards that goal.

We must also stand up to the recent tendency to pursue racist policies and resort to force in pursuit of expansionist gains under the slogan of "ethnic cleansing", a practice that gives free reign to a base natural disposition to kill and destroy at a level which defies reason and flouts every moral precept.

There is no doubt that the international Organization needs reform if it is to respond effectively to the demands of a new world economy and changing world order. The United Nations is quite capable of introducing the necessary reforms. All it needs is the political will of its Member States.

Let us make the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations a fresh start so that the Organization may play a more effective role in the life of the international community. This is an opportunity which must be seized and not wasted.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Yemen for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Abdourabou Mansour Hadi, Vice-President of the Republic of Yemen, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. César Paredes Canto, Vice-President of the Republic of Peru

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. César Paredes Canto, Vice-President of the Republic of Peru.

His Excellency Mr. César Paredes Canto, Vice-President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Paredes Canto *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Peru, a founder nation of our Organization joins in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations with a message which, as is our tradition, strongly emphasizes our country's unalterable dedication to peace.

In so doing, Peru reiterates its firm conviction that a fundamental commitment to peace must continue to be the focus of our common efforts in the framework of the United Nations because, without it, it would be impossible to attain positive and permanent results in any of the world Organization's other fields of activity.

We must therefore take an affirmative step on this solemn occasion and today renew our pledge to the letter and spirit of the Charter, reaffirming that international law is the source of universal understanding and provides the common ground for guaranteeing civilized and peaceful coexistence among the peoples and States of the world.

The United Nations has had unquestionable successes in the 50 years of its existence. Peru recognizes them and appreciates them at their full transcendent value. However, we cannot fail to stress that, during this period, we have not experienced 50 years of world peace. The conflicts that are still proliferating in many parts of the Earth mean that, at this very moment, men, women and children are falling victim to armed clashes which, far from resolving problems, aggravate them because land that is strewn with destruction and death is the most fertile ground for resentment and further sterile conflicts, even more bitter and prolonged, generating an endless spiral of violence.

Nevertheless, we are firmly convinced that the United Nations still represents the best choice for collectively maintaining peace. That will require prompt reforms, so that the universal Organization may be able to strengthen its methods of work, review its priorities, and enhance its efficiency. With regard to the membership of the Security Council, restructuring is indispensable and urgent if it is to maintain its usefulness and influence as a mechanism for preserving peace. The world which gave rise to the present structure of the Security Council no longer exists. The world order emerging from the Second World War has been overtaken by events. Accordingly, the Council should, in order to be effective, adapt itself to the reality and challenges of the present and the future, and should include representatives of the present world order. The rapid growth in the number of independent States and the emergence of new Powers in the political and economic sphere should be taken into account in the composition of the Security Council. Peru therefore advocates expansion of the Council in order to ensure equitable participation by developing countries and it supports also the aspirations of States such as Japan and Germany to become permanent Members.

The capacity of the United Nations to respond to multiple and changing challenges will continue to be put to the test in the coming years and well into the twenty-first century. To face those new and varied challenges, we must strengthen the world Organization and give it our renewed support. The new threats to peace and security are today taking the form of deepening poverty, lack of food, deficiencies in education, technological backwardness, violence in the cities and environmental degradation. The United Nations has an active role to play to promote international cooperation and seek to remedy those problems so that conditions can be created under which the global extension of progress may soon become a reality for all the peoples of the world.

The message of peace sent by our President, Mr. Alberto Fujimori, to all the Members of this Organization and in the same spirit, I am bringing on behalf of Peru, to this solemn Commemorative Meeting carries the force and conviction of a people who, for over a decade, have lived and suffered through a wrenching history of internal violence and who have regained the fundamental right to live in harmony and look to the future with hope, to feel that they are masters of their own fate. Peru, now filled with optimism, is holding fast to the peace it has won and fervently hopes that the United Nations will make its action ever more effective so that the ideal of peace by which it was founded may extend to all the peoples of the world.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Peru for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. César Paredes Canto, Vice-President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Morocco

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Morocco.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted to the rostrum.

Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me to deliver this address on behalf of His Majesty. It reads as follows:

> "Fifty years ago, the United Nations was created on the initiative of fifty Nations with the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. Today, membership of the Organization has reached one hundred and eighty-five States. This clearly demonstrates the perspicacity of the original founders.
>
> "Let us therefore congratulate our Organization on its longevity and on the breadth of its purpose. Let us also congratulate ourselves on all that we have secured from its ceaseless efforts to consolidate the civilizational dimension of international cooperation.
>
> "Without a doubt, the United Nations has contributed to the maturity humankind has achieved and to the enlightenment it has gained. This has led to the lowering of the barriers of antagonism and divergence that prevailed in international relations in the past, and to the laying of the framework for new methods of international collaboration.
>
> "At the birth of our Organization in 1945, the expectation was that its functioning was going to be characterized by sound international cooperation. It was not long however before the world found itself in the grip of a cold war situation that developed between two blocs which competed for influence. This situation led several countries of the South

during the nineteen sixties to align themselves with one or the other of the two competing blocs, and to seek international cooperation outside the framework of the United Nations within which the international community was supposed to work in understanding and harmony. As a result, the activity of the United Nations was rendered ineffectual and its work in many areas was marginalized. The specialized agencies of the United Nations, be they in education, science or culture, or in food, health or development, as well as the other agencies which were created by the United Nations to benefit mankind through non-political activities, were marginalized and their role diminished. The result was that humanity did not benefit from those agencies as it should have, whilst their specialized activities constitute the very essence, objective and purpose of the United Nations — we might even say, the very reason for its existence.

"Today, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, and as we stop to take stock of its strengths and weaknesses, we must reaffirm our faith in its mission which must continue and in its principles which the Charter introduced as guidelines for international action.

"We are all aware that the Organization will not succeed in carrying out its mission unless it is provided with all the necessary means, especially the material means that would enable it to do its work.

"Therefore, if we are to remain deserving Members of this Organization, we must carefully examine its internal problems and, in consultation with each other, find the means to solve them.

"If it is truly our desire to have mankind reap the benefits of the activities of this Organization, and in particular those of the specialized agencies in the areas of health and development and education and culture, we must not waste any time in rescuing the Organization and in making it capable of addressing the issues that face mankind so that it may live up to the hopes and expectations that have been attached to it. This must be done quickly, before there appears on the international political scene another giant harbouring unipolar aspirations who would return us, God forbid, to the era of the cold war from whose consequences humanity suffered so much and from whose influence it was deeply scarred.

"On this special occasion, we would like to reaffirm before you our commitment to the principles of the United Nations, not only in our capacity as King of Morocco, but also in our capacity as President of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which consists of 54 member States and which speaks for 1.2 billion people.

"The rejection of violence and terrorism, the commitment to peaceful coexistence, religious tolerance and enlightened thought are all deeply rooted in the precepts and teachings of Islam. This is what compels us to commit ourselves, without compromise, to seeing that the principles of the Charter increasingly govern international action, principles of peace and security for all the components of human society."

The President: I thank the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Morocco, who read out a message from the King.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, P.C., K.C.M.G., Q.C., Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, P.C., K.C.M.G., Q.C., Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I feel deeply privileged to address this Assembly of sovereign nations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, an Organization that has for the past half century been at the service of mankind.

On this special day, we pay homage to the founding Members who were motivated by the wish

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

To those who have striven towards these goals, to all men and women who have carried out the work of the United Nations and served its ideals, in particular those who have given their lives during their service to the United Nations, let us today express our deepest and most sincere gratitude.

Although at present the activities of the blue-helmeted peace-keepers have emerged as the most visible role associated with this world Organization, the United Nations and its family of agencies are constructively engaged in a wide spectrum of challenging tasks.

The United Nations, through its agencies, has contributed to the eradication of smallpox, immunized four fifths of the world's children against deadly diseases, provided food aid, coordinated emergency relief in the face of disasters, natural or otherwise, and helped to avert or end wars and maintain international peace and stability.

Since adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the United Nations has helped enact dozens of comprehensive agreements on political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. The Earth Summit, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, resulted in treaties on biodiversity and climate change. With the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund, women in developing countries are better able to plan their families. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme has worked to reduce demand for illicit drugs and to suppress drug trafficking. Let us also not forget the major role played by the United Nations in bringing about the downfall of the abhorrent system of apartheid.

One of the greatest contributions of the United Nations, in the view of my delegation, is the sense of confidence and security it has created around the world by its very presence and existence. Rich or poor, big or small, literate or illiterate, regardless of colour or creed, peoples and States may knock on the door of the United Nations in the event of any attack, aggression or invasion. Although immediate solutions may not always be readily available, negotiations undertaken have generally proved to be positive. In the past 50 years the United Nations has been busy creating a world run by law rather than by force. It is at the forefront of efforts to come to grips with conflicts around the world.

My country stands resolutely committed to the principles and objectives of the United Nations. We consider it natural, therefore, that the United Nations should have the support of all international organizations working for peace worldwide, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries or the francophone community, among others.

(spoke in French)

My country has the honour of presiding over the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the 47 countries that use French as a common language. At the Fifth Summit, held in Mauritius in October 1993, we decided to play a more political role on the international scene. We committed ourselves to seeking appropriate solutions to major political and economic problems and to work for peace, democracy and development within the framework of a new partnership with all the multilateral organizations, at the forefront of which is the United Nations.

(spoke in English)

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which has gathered in one place the largest-ever assembly of Heads of State and Government in modern history, provides us with the unique opportunity of thinking about how we can make the Organization play a more effective and efficient role in the future.

The United Nations is at the crossroads. It has already been challenged by an unprecedented number of conflicts and humanitarian emergencies on an unprecedented scale throughout the world. It has, none the less, responded well, bearing in mind how severely under-resourced it has been. The time is not for despair but for a renewal of efforts to rekindle the original aspirations of the United Nations as an Organization committed to building a functioning world community.

For years now we have agreed that it is essential to review the functioning of the United Nations. My delegation therefore fully supports the ongoing discussions by the different working groups set up to consider ways and means of reforming and strengthening the United Nations. A reinvigorated and effective United Nations must be relevant to the aspirations of those it is meant for. It is therefore important to ensure that, whatever options we choose, they should respond to the individual and collective needs of our peoples.

In this connection, the main organ of the United Nations, the Security Council, should be made more democratic and representative through an expansion of its membership at the level of both permanent and non-permanent members. The composition of the Security Council should reflect the aspirations of the United Nations Charter as well as the present political, geographical, economic and demographic realities.

In this respect, my delegation firmly believes that India, the largest parliamentary democracy, should be entitled to a permanent seat on the Security Council, among others, as well as a representative of the small island States. Given the specificities of small island States, I submit for the consideration of this august gathering that small island States as a group, reflecting a distinctive reality, should find permanent representation on the Security Council.

Need I stress the vulnerability of small island States, whether from an environmental, economic or security point of view? I believe that what happened in Comoros recently is an ample reminder of such vulnerability. Therefore, the small island States, with their diversity and multiplicity of population, languages and cultures, deserve that their specific vision of world affairs be heard at the main organ of the United Nations.

From 51 in 1945 the membership of the United Nations has increased to 185 today. This in itself is evidence of the expression of willingness on the part of the countries of the world to come together, to unite and to work together towards a common goal which would serve the best interests of humanity.

However, in this era of spectacular expansion of access to global telecommunication technology and of a fast emerging interdependent world, it is important that we realize and converge our efforts to bridge both the economic gap and the technological gap between industrialized and developing countries.

In this respect, many of the newly independent countries of the post-war period which are Members of the United Nations require the concerted efforts and the special attention of the international community for the take-off of their economies.

The United Nations has a global mission to address felt needs, to further the common objectives of the world community and to promote the economic and social advancement of peoples in all countries, big and small, thus creating the conditions for the peaceful development of all.

Let us therefore dedicate ourselves to creating such an environment in a spirit of mutual respect and harmonious coexistence of the different cultures flourishing on the surface of our planet. Let the culture of tolerance be fixed in people's minds permanently and guide our actions through the next century.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for his statement.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, P.C., K.C.M.G., Q.C., Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Lester B. Bird, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable Lester Bird, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Lester B. Bird, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Bird: I come neither to bury the United Nations nor to praise it. Today the United Nations moral authority is sorely wounded, bleeding from its wounds in Bosnia, in Rwanda and in Somalia.

Rogue regimes in these places have challenged the power of the United Nations and found an impotent force constrained by its limited operations' mandate and weakened by the paucity of its resources. The might of the world community, which should have been an overwhelming force to end conflict, stop killing and save lives, proved to be incapable of enforcing the peace that it set out to keep — hobbled essentially by its Member States.

Beyond its major task of prevention and termination of armed conflict, the United Nations also held out the prospect of economic progress for developing countries such as my own. Yet globally the poor have become poorer and the gap between the rich and poor nations has widened to a chasm.

So far in the decade of the 1990s, the United Nations has initiated five world conferences on development issues ranging from environment, through social issues and population, to the role of women. It remains to be seen whether the substance of these conferences will go any further than their form.

But if the contribution to these conferences by the powerful nations of the world is any measure of their capacity

> "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples",

as the Charter promised they would, then I suspect that the labours of the 1990s will prove fruitless.

It is in this connection that I commend to Member States urgent consideration of the proposal contained in the report of the Commission on Global Governance for an Economic Security Council, imbued with the same standing now enjoyed by the Security Council on security matters, but with a wider, more representative membership, including smaller States, to give political leadership and promote consensus on international economic issues. If this is not done the flame of hope which the United Nations ignited in our hearts will lose even the flicker that is kept alive only by our commitment to internationalism.

Grave environmental degradation has occurred at a rapid rate over the 50 years of the life of the United Nations. The effects of global warming are already being felt brutally in countries such as mine where the destructive capacity of storms intensifies every year. If the depletion of the ozone layer and the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continue unabated as a result of consumption and waste by just 20 per cent of the world's people in rich nations, regions such as mine will be continuously devastated by storms, with consequential refugee problems for the States of the North.

The United Nations alerts the international community to the danger, but is powerless to act to prevent it.

Whom do we blame for this troubling state of affairs?

It cannot be the United Nations, its Secretaries-General or the thousands of United Nations soldiers and civilians scattered around the world trying desperately to preserve the prestige and authority of this body, which is supposed to represent the will and command of the world community. From the inception of the United Nations, its staff have tried to keep peace among warring forces; they have delivered humanitarian aid, supervised elections and trained police forces — all in the most trying circumstances.

The blame for the United Nations debilitation does not lie with them; it rests squarely on the shoulders of its Member States, and particularly on those States which arrogate to themselves control of United Nations activities.

We must recall that when, 50 years ago, the founders of the United Nations brought this Organization into existence, they did not create a world government, elected by and accountable to the people in whose name the Charter was proclaimed; what was constructed was an international corporation of States, with Member States as shareholders and the few permanent members in the Security Council as its Board of Directors.

In this context, the United Nations can only be as effective as its shareholders together want it to be and as its Board of Directors is mandated to direct it. The problem has been that in large measure its shareholders have not together made the Organization effective, and its directors have too often acted to advance their individual interests rather than the Charter obligations which all Member States are pledged to uphold.

If the United Nations were a multinational company, it would have collapsed long ago. Starved of equity financing by its shareholders, unable to deliver the goods it claims to produce, stalemated at the level of its Board of Directors on decisions vital to its survival, it would have been put into receivership or liquidation and a public inquiry would have been held into the conduct of its operations. Somebody or bodies would have had to pay — or pay up.

In this connection, I might mention that my own country, small though it is and lacking in resources, has paid its contributions in full, including its peace-keeping assessments, and one quarter of my country's defence force is serving in Haiti in the United Nations peace-keeping mission there.

No organization which has reached the age of 50 can be without the need for reform. But we would make a sad mistake if we focused such reform on the Organization alone and neglected the role of States in reducing its effectiveness. The two must be done together, or we would have treated only the symptoms of debilitation; we would not have tackled its causes.

There is no shortage of recommendations for reform of the Organization: we have listened to them for two days. In the short time allowed to me, I will not attempt to set out my own views on reforms. Suffice it for me to say that the world of 1995 is vastly different from that of 1945. Technological change, population growth, environmental vandalism, drug trafficking, rising poverty and the spread of disease have all conjoined globally to place pressures upon States that not even the most powerful can withstand alone. The need for an organized international response to the problems confronting mankind has become greater, not smaller.

With all its imperfections, the United Nations remains mankind's best hope for solving together the problems that jointly beset the world community.

Let us reform the United Nations, by all means. Let us cut waste and improve efficiency, but, in doing so, let us ensure that the decisions and operations of the Organization effectively express the desires of the international community as a whole, and not just the w[illegible] of a privileged few. Let us resolve to improve the capacity of the United Nations by giving it the resources, functions and coordinating powers that are essential to its tasks.

In the words of Brian Urquhart, a distinguished former servant of the United Nations, mankind has

> "created unprecedented possibilities for both progress and disaster on our planet without yet assuming the collective responsibility that both these possibilities demand".

After 50 years it is time for States to assume that responsibility and, in doing so, to reconstruct a vision of nations united in the pursuit of a world of peace, equity and justice.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Lester B. Bird, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland.

His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Oddsson: The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to this indispensable Organization and its ideals. The anniversary also provides Member States with an opportunity to take stock of the Organization's shortcomings and openly discuss how to overcome them.

The many important achievements of the United Nations have sustained, and can enhance, the status of the Organization. Furthermore, almost universal membership and combined resources provide the Organization with a unique potential for global action.

Smaller States, including Iceland, equate multilateral cooperation with the maintenance of security in the widest sense. Ultimately, in the current international system, all the countries of the world are increasingly affected by the same difficulties and challenges, and they basically have the same needs and aspirations. No single country, however powerful, can disregard global interdependence or turn a blind eye to problems of global significance.

To ensure that the United Nations lives up to its full potential, the process of adapting it to a changing global agenda must be brought to a successful conclusion. Necessary reforms need to be agreed upon and implemented without delay. The composition of the Security Council should reflect new realities, through a greater number of both permanent and non-permanent members. The General Assembly should become more focused on relevance and efficiency.

The inherent link between peace and development is obvious. Sustainable development, already an established concept, must become the basis of urgent action. The United Nations is the only available and conceivable venue for concerted action on a global scale. It is the only Organization capable of coordinating a reaction to the disintegration of States and humanitarian disasters worldwide and for attaining consensus on environmental protection and the management of natural resources.

Similarly, the United Nations is in a unique position, in cooperation with regional organizations, to initiate and conduct peace-keeping operations, monitor the implementation of elections and agreements on human rights and carry out humanitarian interventions. This capability must be enhanced, with a particular emphasis on early warning and rapid deployment. At the same time, the United Nations must not lose sight of maintaining peace for the long term by assisting in the reconstruction of societies ravaged by war.

There is a correlation between democracy and respect for human rights, on the one hand, and international peace and stability, on the other. Unfortunately, many Member States of the United Nations do not honour their commitments pertaining to human rights and democracy, which they voluntarily undertook by signing the United Nations Charter and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and this is rightly of concern to the international community. Human rights are universal, and their violation cannot be excused by reference to economic, social, religious or cultural circumstances.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, when mankind faces many new and difficult challenges, it is deplorable that the functioning and strengthening of the United Nations is being impeded by a financial crisis arising from the late payment or non-payment of assessed contributions to the Organization. Member States should pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions, as they are obligated to do under the Charter. The payment of arrears should not be made dependent on reforms of the United Nations. Moreover, reforms become impossible if the Organization is financially crippled. There is general support among Member States for reforms; they are being considered and must be implemented.

The United Nations has achieved important results and continues to hold promise. This Special Commemorative Meeting in New York should reinvigorate the Organization and chart a course for the future. Let this be the legacy of these three days in New York.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden.

His Excellency Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Carlsson: Reform is a popular word these days. "The United Nations has to be reformed" is a phrase that almost every speaker at this rostrum has used during this Meeting. But it seems quite clear that the word reform has different meanings for different speakers.

The Swedish Government is seeking reform in the governance and financing of the multilateral system — radical reform, in fact — but we will never allow reform to become a cover for cut-downs and cop-outs.

Earlier this year, I wrote to 15 of my colleagues in different parts of the world. I invited them to participate in an effort reflecting the concern of a number of political leaders who strongly believe in multilateralism, in global solutions and in the United Nations.

We met yesterday to discuss the present situation of the United Nations system and we adopted a statement in support of global cooperation to promote common security and to improve the management of economic interdependencies. This statement is an earnest, strong commitment to work for a United Nations that can help us meet the new global challenges. The 16 of us have agreed to continue to keep in touch and to be prepared to offer our continued strong political support for a more vital United Nations, adapted also to the next century.

The necessary changes will not come about by themselves. There is a need for a mechanism, a process — a process which will allow for a thorough discussion of all the constructive ideas and proposals that have come up, within and outside of the United Nations.

The Commission on Global Governance, which I chair together with Sir Shridath Ramphal, has proposed a World Conference on Governance in 1998. Such a conference would offer an opportunity to discuss and decide, in a comprehensive manner, a number of the most important issues: measures to safeguard the security of people, steps to handle economic interdependencies, ways to strengthen the United Nations machinery and ways to promote respect for international law.

Nowhere is the crisis in multilateralism more apparent than in the unwillingness of some Member States to contribute. They want more and more from our common Organization, yet, these countries are not willing to pay their membership fees. That is simply not acceptable.

We live in a world where more and more services need to be provided globally, in our truly common interest. We must develop systems of financing that ensure adequate, predictable and sustainable levels of funding. The mandatory contributions should continue to be the backbone of the financing of the core activities, but the dependency of one large contributor must be reduced. However, this may not be enough.I believe that the time has come to seriously discuss alternative methods of getting the necessary resources to the United Nations system. We need to explore the possibility of creating an international tax on foreign currency transactions. We need to consider the possibility of introducing charges for the use of common global resources such as the sea-lanes for ships or the ocean fishing areas, or an extra tax on airline tickets.

While these options are being explored, we must uphold the strictest respect for the financial commitments we all have made when accepting the Charter of the United Nations. It is a shame that so many Member States do not pay when they owe this to the Organization. The United Nations cannot be more than what its Members allow it to be.

At a time when the work of the United Nations is more important than ever, it is particularly urgent that all Members pay their contributions in full and on time. I confirm the commitment of the Government of Sweden to do exactly that.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Habib Thiam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Habib Thiam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal.

His Excellency Mr. Habib Thiam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Thiam (*interpretation from French*): Our presence at this "high place", on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal, in an expression of the homage the people of Senegal to the founding fathers of our Organization, and of their tribute to the successive Secretaries-General, to you, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to their staff who have served the United Nations, sometimes even sacrificing their lives.

Our presence also bears witness to our renewed adherence to the ideals of the United Nations and it attests to our faith in, and commitment to, the Organization's unique mission of peace and cooperation, solidarity and progress. The world has changed and that is in keeping with the interminable but ever renewed struggle for freedom.

The world economy has deteriorated, going from one crisis to another, to the detriment of developing countries. Human rights have assumed a more important meaning, a broader and more universal one.

International peace and security, economic and social development, humanitarian aid and promotion of the rule of law continue to be permanent objectives which the United Nations has always been striving to achieve in the constant struggle for freedom. Indeed, the United Nations has not only persisted in this far-reaching enterprise, it has also inspired a great number of major positive transformations with a view to finding solutions to the problems facing our human race.

But, even so, the appreciation of the Organization's work is often tainted with criticism which is sometimes justified but often unfounded. It is because the strength of the United Nations is only a reflection of our own strengths while its weaknesses or shortcomings are only our own. We should, therefore, make allowances. The United Nations exists and can only act in conformity with the collective political will of our various States and with the help of the means we put at its disposal.

The obstacles, or even the failures recorded so far — for instance in the promotion of truly peaceful relations in conflict zones such as the Middle East, in the peace-keeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the humanitarian aid to refugees and displaced persons from Rwanda and Burundi, in the quest for general and total disarmament, in improving people's living standards, in creating conditions for progress and development, in the fight against poverty and exclusion, in protection of the environment, in the promotion and protection of human rights, in the completion of the decolonization process, the fight against illicit drug trafficking and terrorism, in the progressive development of international law — these are mere reflections of the contradictory attitudes and interests of our various States or even those of numerous pressure groups.

Hence, it is important for our Governments to take joint action within the United Nations framework to fight against intolerance, hatred and oppression, wherever they exist. And since peace is indivisible, such an effort should be geared towards transforming all the regions of the world and should cover all fields of human endeavour. Such is the credo of President Abdou Diouf and the people of Senegal and that is why they have always responded positively to appeals for freedom, for instance, in the course of the Gulf War, in Liberia, Rwanda, in the former Yugoslavia, in Cambodia, in Lebanon and in Shaba.

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

However, peace implies also eliminating the acts of injustice and the inertia that continue to characterize international economic relations. In this respect, the replenishment of the funds for the World Bank's International Development Association seems to us to be an urgent task for the rich nations. Such action goes hand in hand with the need to reduce appreciably, or even cancel, the debts of developing countries, in addition to finding a solution to the deteriorating terms of trade between the North and the South. This is still an aspect of the struggle for freedom.

Now that the ideological confrontations have ended, new ideas are emerging to emphasize the need to go beyond the traditional alliances and establish larger groups. In Senegal, with President Abdou Diouf, we subscribe to these ideas, which should be supported by everyone because we have a common destiny.

This new era of peace and freedom, implies the definitive disappearance of the long-outdated cleavages that helped impede the international community's progress towards the fundamental goal of human solidarity. Above all, it calls for great generosity. Are generosity, warmheartedness, development, peace and freedom incompatible? I do not think so.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Habib Thiam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Maxime Carlot Korman, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vanuatu

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Maxime Carlot Korman, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vanuatu.

His Excellency The Honourable Maxime Carlot Korman, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Carlot Korman (*interpretation from French*): It is both an honour and a privilege for me to address the General Assembly and participate in this Special Meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

I should like, on behalf of the people of Vanuatu, to congratulate Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

As the Head of an Oceanian Government, I applaud the admission of the Republic of Palau to the Organization as its 185th Member.

At a time when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and, in particular, the development programmes adopted and applied for the benefit of Member States, and the means established to guarantee international peace and security, it is our duty to do more to help the Organization face the new challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Republic of Vanuatu congratulates the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and assures him of its support for the initiatives for reform recently undertaken to meet the needs of Member States, particularly in the fields of the sustainable development of island States, protection of the environment, social development and the role of women. These initiatives must now be taken up in other United Nations bodies.

The Security Council must be expanded to include other permanent members and to guarantee adequate representation of the countries of the South, particularly small States. Similarly, the other major organs, institutions and specialized agencies of the United Nations must be the subject of review in the light of the needs of the international community of tomorrow.

In the same spirit of reform, the nations of the Pacific feel that it is necessary today to review current regional bodies in the light of the development priorities that they have set, taking account of developments in the international economic, social and political environment — in particular, within the United Nations system.

The Republic of Vanuatu, concerned about the social and economic future of the island communities of Oceania, takes the opportunity of this Special Commemorative Meeting to appeal to the United Nations and all Member States to focus more attention on the needs of our region. While many works and speeches recognize the Pacific as being the centre of the world in the twenty-first century, the nations and peoples that make it up have only a symbolic rate of economic growth, representing barely a fraction of the rate of growth of most Asian countries.

The political situation in the Pacific may seem complex because some entities are Territories dependent on their respective Trusteeship authorities. However, the peoples of these island entities, whether or not they are independent, face similar problems. They share the same Pacific Ocean, which represents a quarter of the exclusive economic zones of the planet's oceans. Consequently, the concept of sustainable development and the maintenance of long-term regional peace and security for all the countries and territories of the Pacific region are today indispensable. Limiting United Nations consideration of needs and priorities to States Members of this Organization would be definite carelessness on the part of the international community. We recognize that it is necessary to establish a constructive dialogue with the Governments of the regional territories, and I call for their understanding.

The peoples and Governments of Oceania need more active participation by the United Nations in the initiatives they undertake in the context of appropriate sustainable development and regional peace and security. The plan for a regional support unit adopted by the South Pacific Forum in Madang is an example worth considering.

Our Asian Pacific region is passing through a delicate period. The threat to the environment and to peoples posed by nuclear testing, plans for the storage of nuclear and chemical wastes, the transporting of the nuclear wastes of various countries, and the spread of radioactivity as a result of testing with no thought for environmental safety are today a question of international importance. This lack of respect for the Pacific can and might be the beginning of a disaster, not only for us in Oceania but also for international security and the environment of coastal States.

The Republic of Vanuatu congratulates France, not only for limiting testing but also for taking measures to protect the environment and for its commitment to the denuclearization of the Pacific and the world. Furthermore, the Republic of Vanuatu welcomes the recent announcement by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their joint decision to sign the Protocols to the Treaty making the South Pacific a nuclear-free zone.

Once again, by focusing special attention on the needs and problems of these island nations the United Nations will be contributing to the region's efforts to restructure existing bodies, enabling them to respond better to the expectations of the island populations.

Let us respect peoples and guarantee life in the regions of our world. Let us effectively protect the environment in our respective regions. In a word, let us, together, build a more pacific world.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu for his statement.

His Excellency The Honourable Maxime Carlot Korman, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra.

His Excellency Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Forné Molné (*spoke in Catalan; English text furnished by the delegation*): On this special day and in this illustrious forum, it is my task as Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra to convey to the General Assembly the hopes of the people of Andorra for an ever stronger and ever more effective United Nations and, at the dawn of the third millennium, our yearning for a more just and prosperous world that can satisfy the noble aspiration of our great human family to peace and development.

In the face of the ever-present examples of lack of tolerance and solidarity, it might seem that to speak of the "human family" is to speak of a desire rather than of a reality. Making the facts accord with the words spoken in this forum depends to a very large extent on us.

Today, with five years to go before the year 2000, communications and information have become global, and economic and political relations between peoples transcend frontiers in a way that was unforeseeable at the beginning of this century, now drawing to a close. The women and men everywhere can feel that they are citizens of the world, over and above their links to their village, city, nation or State.

At the beginning of this century, we began to understand that the world was getting smaller, particularly following the World Wars, a bad example which did however serve to stimulate the nobler initiatives of mankind. The creation of the United Nations, based on the universal values of tolerance and peace, overturned the old world-view, and from global war we moved on to collective solidarity and the challenges of development.

Since then, not everything has been well done. The world continues to be imperfect and to be plagued by conflict and misery. Even as we speak in this temple of peaceful coexistence, fighting is under way in many places; children are continuing to die; yet more widows are weeping over their husbands; yet more parents are losing their children.

It is not easy to continue to speak of good intentions but we must do it. We must insist on the values that can allow mankind to survive: respect for human rights, the fundamental importance of the individual, the conservation of our natural and historical heritages.

We shall have to use preventive diplomacy more often and we shall also have to reform certain aspects of the structure of the United Nations, including the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the Organization's financial capacity and administrative structure.

Yet we must not tamper with the founding principles of this Organization. We must zealously preserve the principle of equality between States; it is the source of tolerance between great and small, the key to a balanced dialogue between the great and the small communities. Undoubtedly, the great States can take correct decisions that will affect us all. But they can also make overwhelming errors in direct proportion to their very size and with multiple side-effects.

Small States such as Andorra must continue to be the ones to steer the great towards dialogue and see to it that unambiguous words and open hands, which are the tools of peace, are used more often, and that the tools of war are laid aside.

Because of the demands of our histories, small communities can give us lessons in peaceful coexistence, cordial understanding, respect and tolerance. The cultural diversity of human communities obligates us, in a global world, to a dialogue among equals; this is the heart, motor and soul of the respect for others which is an essential value for peace and development.

My small country, the State of Andorra, is the historical result of an arbitration that took place in the thirteenth century and has allowed Andorrans to keep and confirm their identity at all times throughout the most turbulent centuries of old Europe. The Catalan writer Salvador Espriu called Andorra "this prodigy, almost a miracle". Bound by the heritage of our ancestors, I can guarantee that Andorra, as hitherto, will spare no effort to share with other States its history of 700 years of peace and tolerance as well as all we have learned from being a land of refuge. Our experience is similar to that of many other small States and one which the big States should understand and value.

We celebrate joyfully the establishment of the United Nations and wish it well on its first half-century of existence. Today, we all pledge to help it advance, as a standard of equality among men and women and peoples, an advocate of tolerance, an instrument for promoting peace, for defending our natural heritage and for development. Many happy returns, United Nations!

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Marc Forné Molné, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore.

His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Goh: We congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to preside over this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his leadership of and dedication to the Organization. Let me assure both of them of my delegation's full support.

The United Nations has been criticized, even maligned. Some of the criticisms are valid, but many of them are unfair. Let us not forget that the United Nations has contributed to a better world, despite its shortcomings and failures in several areas.

Globalization will be the major driving force in the next 50 years. Advances in telecommunications and technology, new ideas, global concerns over the environment and security, multinational joint ventures in business and the economic reforms and outward orientation of more and more countries will push nations to work together rather than against each other.

Regional groupings and multilateral bodies are becoming increasingly important. New institutions and forums, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the proposed Asia-Europe meeting, are being created. Existing institutions, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and such new ones as the World Trade Organization are also adapting to the changing environment.

The United Nations may not necessarily be the prime mover in many world events, given the increasing strength of these regional and multilateral bodies. But it has a very important integrative function: that of maintaining global coherence and ensuring that no country is excluded in the march towards security, peace and prosperity.

Globalization will change the way we look at sovereign authority. Those cities and areas within larger nation-States that can go global and link up with others outside their national boundaries will flourish as an integral part of a larger region. Those that stay local will lag behind. It is here that the United Nations can make a big contribution by helping sovereign States to integrate as parts of a larger economic entity and world community.

To meet these challenges, the United Nations must streamline and rationalize itself. Financial reform is a critical area. The United Nations cannot flounder from financial crisis to financial crisis. But no financial reform, however worthy and efficient, will be politically acceptable if the fundamental principle that Member States must pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions is compromised. Assessed contributions are binding legal obligations. They are not to be lightly discarded when inconvenient. To flout them unilaterally goes against the very grain of the United Nations ideal.

Security Council reform is another key area. There is as yet no consensus on which or how many or what kind of new members there should be, or on what terms. We believe that the most practical means of achieving consensus on the reform of the Security Council is to identify objective general criteria that all permanent members, present or aspiring, must fulfil. This rational approach of setting a common standard of responsibilities as well as privileges will better stand the test of time. If we can agree on this, consensus on specific countries will naturally emerge.

Singapore will continue to be deeply committed to the United Nations. The United Nations is not perfect, but it is the best institution akin to a world government that we have. Small countries like Singapore need the United Nations, and must play a constructive role in supporting it. We take the United Nations seriously, and will actively help build consensus and facilitate agreement.

The United Nations alone cannot make a better world. It must be backed by the political will and the constructive contribution of its Members. The United Nations will become stronger and more relevant if Member States support it with clear, realistic and practical long-term goals. There is no greater hope for a better world than an effective United Nations whose Members are committed to bringing this about.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Rao: Half a century ago today, world leaders gathered together to create an institution of the peoples of the world to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That was a momentous event in human history. Today, in commemorating that event, we look back and find that the successes of the United Nations have been many. Critics tend to concentrate upon failures, but on an objective appraisal the United Nations remains humankind's beacon of hope. The combined United Nations family has made commendable efforts for the overall well-being of mankind.

If the relevance of the United Nations is to continue, we will now need to address the root causes of what afflicts humankind. Looking into the causes even casually, nuclear weapons still loom large, nowhere near abolition. Poverty and underdevelopment are pervasive in many continents. International terrorism haunts the innocent. Harmony in pluralistic societies, whose number is the largest, is being disrupted by increasing fundamentalist trends based on exclusivism and intolerance, and in many cases hatred.

For several decades the spell of the cold war gripped the global community almost completely. The cold war brought a dual approach to every department of human life — politics, economics, war, peace, societal questions, art, literature: everything. The public and the private, the individual and the collective, the orthodox and the liberal, the status quo and the pro-change — all these dualities have to be resolved, not in theory, but in reality, to bring happiness to man and also to suit individual conditions. While no system can work without a philosophical underpinning, the present juncture provides new opportunities to address problems without the morbid preoccupations of the earlier confrontation.

The task of statesmanship has always been to sift the permanent from the ephemeral. An emphasis on commonality is therefore of the essence in the world of tomorrow which, paradoxically, tends to shrink in terms of physical distance, but threatens at any moment to fall apart in many other respects.

There can be no security for anyone in a world bristling with nuclear weapons. Deterrence is a false belief. I would make a fervent appeal to this Assembly to take credible steps for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a stipulated time-frame. India's Action Plan, presented in 1988 in this regard, could serve as an appropriate starting-point. India looks upon it essentially as a proposal inspired by Gandhian principles and is fully committed to it.

The world's great danger today is the spread of terrorism. When sponsored and supported by States, terrorism becomes another means of waging war. The international community must therefore resolve to combat this menace, since it threatens the very basis of peaceful societies.

The realities today are trans-ideological. The crying need of a vast majority of nations is all-round development. This has to be Priority One for a long time. We need a vision of global harmony and cooperation, transcending many atavistic tendencies. Here, the message of Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence, could lead the world to a safe haven in the coming millennium.

The United Nations today includes a much larger number of independent, sovereign States than when it began. In such a context, the United Nations cannot afford to be seen as either exclusivist or incomplete, either in appearance or in outlook. In particular, an adequate presence of developing countries is needed on the Security Council on the basis of objective criteria: nations of the world must feel that their stakes in global peace and prosperity are factored into United Nations decision-making.

At the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we thus have the task of making the United Nations truly and effectively the global repository of humankind's aspirations. Right-thinking nations and peoples working together have in the past achieved miracles. I am confident that they can do so again. India will be proud and happy to be part of such an endeavour.

I have deliberately kept bilateral matters out of this short intervention.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark.

His Excellency Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Rasmussen: The creation of the United Nations gave birth to hope. Although the dreams of the founding fathers have not been fully realized, we remain committed to a strong partnership striving for freedom, peace and development. No lasting answers are found in isolationism or nationalism. We share fears and hopes. We have a common agenda and common responsibility.

We dedicate this anniversary to the thousands of people who have put their lives at risk for the ideals of the United Nations.

The new opportunities provided by the end of the cold war must be used to implement a soft security policy. We need to decide on a serious and active follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. This will be a decisive part of the United Nations agenda in the twenty-first century. We need a new strategy. Peace and security are more than military concepts. Soft security policy measures, such as poverty alleviation, sustainable economic and social development, protection of the environment and promotion of human and equal rights, are as important as peace-keeping operations.

Experience has taught us that prevention is better than cure. In times of crisis, speed is of the essence. The ability to act quickly is often what separates failure from success. The United Nations needs a swifter, more credible response to crisis.

That is why my country, Denmark, has proposed that the existing United Nations stand-by forces arrangement be augmented by a multilateral brigade at a state of high readiness. This would greatly improve the ability of the United Nations to act. If an effective stand-by arrangement had been in place, we might have been spared many, many of the conflicts we are now facing. Sparks are easier to put out than fires. Denmark plans to earmark our contribution to the current stand-by forces for such an arrangement. We urge other nations to do likewise.

We, the political leaders, are responsible for pointing the way for the United Nations. We set the agenda. We decide the priorities. The problems of the United Nations are our problems and our responsibility. Yes, reform and rationalization are needed. So is the will to provide the Organization with political support and financial resources.

The United Nations is exactly as strong as we make it. If the Organization does not fulfil our expectations, our credibility — I repeat, our credibility — is at stake. Instead of criticizing the United Nations for not doing enough, we should take a close look at ourselves to see if we are doing enough for the United Nations.

Let us be frank: the current financial crisis threatens to undermine what has been built up over the past 50 years. It is an illusion that an Organization deprived of financial resources should be more susceptible to reform. Securing peace and development costs money. But the expense of doing nothing will be far greater. It is highly regrettable that development assistance from the richest part of the world, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, has dropped to its lowest level in 20 years. The United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product must be met as soon as possible.

The United Nations is larger than it was 50 years ago, but the world is smaller. The challenges of the next century are before us. We are dependent on each other.

We have a shared responsibility. The world needs the United Nations more than ever.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank His Excellency Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark, for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Royal Highness Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Royal Highness Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

His Royal Highness Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, was escorted to the rostrum.

His Royal Highness Norodom Ranariddh (*interpretation from French*): The Royal delegation of Cambodia, which I have the honour to head, is doubly pleased to participate in this fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the prestigious United Nations.

First, this fiftieth anniversary is an opportunity for us to reaffirm our support for the ideals of the United Nations and its constant efforts to ensure peace and development. The Kingdom of Cambodia will support all efforts to democratize our Organization. It would also like to see the admission to the Security Council of new permanent members, such as Germany, Japan and some large States of the South.

Secondly, this year marks also the fortieth anniversary of the admission of Cambodia as a Member of our Organization.

The conflict in Cambodia has ended. The suffering and upheavals of our people lasted for many years. The victory of our people, over itself and over external forces, and the success of the United Nations are the result of a very close collaboration. The positive outcome of the peace process in Cambodia can be seen as an example of a successful United Nations peace-keeping operation.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is pleased today to be able to contribute to reducing tensions and even conflicts in the region of Asia and the Pacific. In becoming reintegrated into the international community, the Kingdom of Cambodia is determined to promote peace, stability and prosperity within that region and in the world.

In that respect, my delegation fully supports the plan of action, presented by President Bill Clinton from this rostrum, to combat terrorism, drug cartels and organized crime, and to reduce the numbers of weapons of mass destruction.

It is true that Cambodia and the Cambodian people have had the historical good fortune of the presence of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk Varman. The sole concern of our illustrious sovereign even to save his people and his country. Inflexible on essential matters, His Majesty the King guided his people along the dreadful path from martyrdom to peace. In this spirit, it is my great honour and privilege to read out the following message that His Majesty the King has addressed to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations:

(spoke in English)

> "Your Excellency, on the auspicious occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I should like, on behalf of the people of Cambodia, to extend to Your Excellency and the staff of the United Nations Organization our warmest congratulations.
>
> "Fifty years ago, the end of the Second World War led to the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco. Since its inception, our Organization has played an important role in helping to solve conflicts caused by the period known as the cold war, when the then-super-Powers were constantly challenging each other, bringing the world to the brink of war. The United Nations also played a critical role, often under very difficult circumstances, in defusing regional conflicts around the world.
>
> "The contribution of the United Nations to world peace has been unique. Through its specialist bodies such as UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization

(FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others, the United Nations has provided both emergency assistance to people around the world in urgent need and development assistance to help raise the standard of living of millions of people. We salute the staff of these United Nations Organizations and thank them for their noble endeavours.

"We Cambodians are particularly indebted to the United Nations for helping our country and people to regain their freedom and independence. We recall with profound gratitude the noble efforts of His Excellency Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Your Excellency's immediate predecessor, and of Their Excellencies Raffeuddin Ahmed and Yasushi Akashi, two of Your Excellency's close collaborators. Cambodians will never forget the assistance provided to our country by the United Nations.

"I very much regret that poor health prevents me from joining Your Excellency and other Heads of State at the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, but I shall be with you all in spirit."

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I thank His Royal Highness Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, for his statement.

His Royal Highness Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Major-General Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Major-General Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji.

His Excellency The Honourable Major-General Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted to the rostrum.

Major-General Rabuka: My country joins other Member States in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We salute its achievements and acknowledge its vital role in the promotion of international peace, security and cooperation.

As a forum for dialogue and reconciliation, it has contributed immensely towards the avoidance of a global war for the longest time in modern history. While it may not have fulfilled all the promises that the Charter holds, its utility and institutional durability are firmly established.

We pay tribute to the founding fathers for their vision and for the ideals that they set for us. In Fiji we share the norms and values reflected in the Charter. Hence, 25 years ago, on attaining independence, one of the first acts of my country was to become a Member of this Organization. Then, my country pledged its support for the Charter and the purposes and principles enshrined in it. I reaffirm that pledge.

Over the years, the United Nations has shown resilience in accepting new Members, in appreciating changes within States and in resolving unexpected complexities in relations between States.

Today, as we celebrate its successes, we do so expecting that new realities will be grasped with appropriate positive responses. For instance, we are witnessing the economic resurgence of Asia and the rapidly diversifying international role of Asian nations. This must be reflected accordingly in the decision-making structures of the United Nations. My country considers important the unification of Korea and the rectification of anomalies in the relationship between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

I commend the United Nations for its concern for small States. In the South Pacific, we have many small States, limited in resources, with constraints on our earning capacity. We are linked to the international community. Its stresses and downturns especially affect us. We remain anxious over the consequences of global warming. Our fragile South Pacific environment needs protection from all destructive acts, whether they be from nuclear tests and weapons or excessive economic exploitation. In this regard, we are happy to note the undertaking given by President Chirac yesterday from this rostrum that France will sign the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga next year. But this undertaking, sadly, is not enough. We and the peoples of the Pacific pray that France will cease its nuclear testing in the region immediately. We also remain committed to gender equality, in harmony with local values and traditions. As we look ahead, I wish to remind fellow Members of the necessity to implement programmes for the sustainable development of small States. The United Nations must also find ways of utilizing the skills and talent of the increasing number of qualified and experienced nationals of these States.

On this auspicious occasion, I welcome the conclusion of the draft declaration by the United Nations Working Group on the rights of indigenous peoples. The action was most appropriate, even if belated. We look forward to its early adoption. Not all the wrongs that history has wrought upon indigenous peoples can now be put right. There are, none the less, significant where redress is possible; the United Nations should not hesitate to ensure for these that remedy is expeditious.

The norms of the powerful have in the past been imposed to disinherit indigenous people, and to this day in some places, to deny them the political self-determination essential for their social and economic advancement. The United Nations must guarantee that external values and forces do not continue to coerce political concessions, economic reforms and social changes not desired by indigenous peoples themselves.

We have contributed to the best of our capacity to the multifaceted activities of the United Nations, including peace-keeping in troubled areas and to the development of the Law of the Sea. We shall continue to contribute to its efforts for peace and security as a participating Member in the community of nations. We remain confident that this Organization will remain true to its ideals; hence I reaffirm my own and my country's commitment to it.

I wish the United Nations Organization well as it sails into its next half century.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji for his statement.

His Excellency The Honourable Major-General Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted to the rostrum.

Sir James Fitz-Allen Mitchell: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh.

In the passage of history, ideas are translated or transformed into substance. Over the passage of time, men with vision conceive an idea, create an institution, and one that benefits mankind for all time. Our United Nations belongs to this noble category, of which there are few that have earned 50 years' respect.

But this does not mean that the structure of the United Nations is perfect. Living institutions, like anything biological, need the nurture of fresh nutrients, fresh ideas. A living thing either improves or perishes. If it does not adjust to the supreme law of the universe, that is, the universality of useful change, then the definition of anachronism awaits this once inspired body.

The victors of the Second World War wrote the rules and enshrined their importance with permanent seats on the Security Council. The defeated peoples of Japan and Germany, who in one lifetime transformed their countries into economic world leaders, have earned the right to belong to this charmed inner circle. By the same token, other evolving regions which have demonstrated their economic potential should among themselves have the right to a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Lest it be thought that the United Nations is to become only a place for the wealthy, so too should other regions be recognized, such as Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Room should however remain for countries to secure a place on an individual basis.

The celebration of this anniversary would not have been so worthy a cause if the evils of communism had not been put to rest. We still await atonement by those who imposed such monumental waste on our civilization. I personally would wish to single out Mr. Gorbachev for his leadership in having jettisoned this awful load on our behalf, and creating the opportunities to carry us sumptuously into the twenty-first century.

The United Nations has much unfinished business. I wish to single out one item on that unfinished agenda, and that is the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. I began with the evolution of the word and ideas. Ideas sometimes take rigid form, and no greater rigidity exists than in religion.

Jerusalem being the birthplace of Christianity, Judaism and the Muslim faiths, all three have equal claim to sovereignty over this cradle of their religion. Jerusalem should become an international city under the umbrella of the United Nations, protected with that status by those who have the power and the moral authority to do so. I see this as a way to peace among the believers. I see this as an idea to erode the terrorism that haunts much of our everyday life around the world. It is not fair that so much energy, time and financial resources be dedicated to coming to terms with this terrorist evil that ought to have no basis for its existence.

Finally, I would urge that this United Nations be no closed shop. Millions of people are still unrepresented among us. The world body must find a way to embrace the world.

The President returned to the Chair.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for his statement.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

His Excellency Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Douglas: I am deeply honoured to represent the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis on this historic fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The United Nations has special significance for the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Prior to my country's attainment of political independence in 1983, Saint Kitts and Nevis was fortunate to have benefited from United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organisation, all of which have helped to prepare my people for the attainment of political independence.

This golden anniversary of the United Nations marks a watershed in the history of our Organization. The configuration of world affairs has changed significantly since the historical signing of the Charter in San Francisco some 50 years ago. However, many old problems still feature prominently on the international agenda. This watershed year, therefore, is a call for nations to marshal their energies and to pool their resources, to harness a future worthy of being passed on to our children.

We are at the proverbial crossroads of international interaction. We stand here today to commemorate 50 years of partnership, of survival and of triumph — our failures notwithstanding. The historic task for us at this present moment is to define the way forward with clarity of vision and purposeful determination.

As I stated in my address to the fiftieth regular session of the General Assembly this past month, my Government believes that the United Nations is a people's Organization. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis calls for concerted action to minimize political and economic instability, to eradicate social violence, to protect and preserve the environment and save our planet earth, to provide some support against the effects of natural disasters, and to stop the ever-increasing occurrence of ethnic conflicts.

My Government is proud to support the United Nations in its appeals to all nations to respect fundamental human rights and to accept differences of opinion, be they individual, ethnic or national.

The time has come for us to address holistically the economic inequalities within the world system which allow certain ideas and policies to prevail over others while those which are indigenous and region-specific are ignored.

We celebrate a half-century dedicated to the pursuit of world peace and, yes, we must praise those who created the Organization to prevent global war. However, it is a matter of regret that nations today continue to arm themselves with weapons of mass destruction. As the war machinery continues to thrive, thousands of helpless people die of starvation each year.

In 50 years, the structure of the United Nations has hardly changed. Yet its circumstances have changed beyond anything its founders would recognize. In this new era, in the approaching millennium, we need a new dispensation. We should endeavour to make the Security Council more representative of and responsive to the membership. It is time for the developing world to become permanent members of the Security Council. The goal of appropriate representation should guide our efforts to ensure that all the peoples of the world, which have observed the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, are welcomed into this fraternity of nations.

When we speak of peace, we are also emphasizing the overwhelming question of our national security. I call on all countries to join forces to combat the illegal international narcotics trade and its attendant ills, which represent the major obstacle to sustainable development and security in small States. Such obstacles must be on the agenda of the United Nations in the years to come. As we look to the future, let us continue to recognize the fundamental role of women in our societies. We must ensure that they take their rightful place as partners in securing a better future for us all. We are not doing them a favour. On the contrary, we are according them the respect and rights they are due.

As we enter the new millennium, let us not only boast of great technological marvels, of man's journey into deep space; let us also be able to boast of children who no longer die of hunger, no longer die of avoidable and curable diseases and in war. We need true partnership and cooperation among all the peoples of the world in order to address the problem of worsening poverty.

As we embark upon the second half of the first 100 years of the United Nations, let us use this occasion to challenge ourselves and this great institution to continue working towards the elimination of war, of hunger, of discrimination and of poverty in this, our global village.

Happy birthday, United Nations; may God bless the United Nations not only for another 50 years, but for another hundred years and beyond.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

His Excellency Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Duncan (*interpretation from French*): When His Excellency Mr. Henri Konan Bedie, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, named me to represent him at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, he instructed me to say how much he regretted that he was unable to be here owing to the general elections under way at home. My pride in representing him at this meeting stems from the fact that the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Ivorian nation attach great importance to the United Nations whose ideals, enshrined in the Charter, are the founding principles of our country.At this solemn meeting, I should like, on behalf of the Ivorian Government, to renew our unswerving devotion to these universal principles and our determination to see them strengthened still further with every passing day.

When its Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy presided over the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Côte d'Ivoire sought through him to demonstrate its interest in and dedication to an institution which, in turn, has confidence in us.

Certain failures notwithstanding, the Organization has achieved laudable successes. We can therefore be legitimately proud of our Organization because it is the institution that has made it possible to forge general consensus on issues of global policy. It is, moreover, the only structure capable of bringing about the implementation of and respect for the great principles of law, thanks simply to the universality of its Charter.

Today, the question is how to reform the United Nations. Our Organization, a mirror on the world, must, 50 years after its creation, still be able to play the role assigned to it while adapting to the changes of our times.

As we see it, it is therefore essential to attune our Organization better to the new international context by mobilizing States and public opinion around new objectives based on one observation, namely that the purposes of the Organization has evolved and broadened enormously, and many new imperatives have emerged, such as the need to pay more attention to preventive diplomacy and more vigorously to promote action to develop the poorest countries of the world.

Let us ask what today's world would be like had the United Nations not existed. Let us thus agree to consolidate the values of peace and justice that our common Organization stands for, as an irreplaceable tool — but one susceptible of improvement — to enable the universal conscience to carve out a path straddling the divergent interests of States.

Urged on by the United Nations, the global village has become reality. But, unfortunately, we are not all housed in the same accommodation in this village. Grappling with unprecedented economic difficulties, African countries have become marginalized and see themselves pushed further away with each passing day, while the concept of solidarity is being chipped away and the wealthiest are tending to sequester themselves. In this context, the idea, once again stated in "An Agenda for Development", of establishing a partnership among the rich and poor with a view to development takes on its full meaning and deserves our support.

Above and beyond expeditious statements, it should be noted that this anniversary is being commemorated against the backdrop of financial crisis. When you analyse it, this is a contributions crisis. The richest countries in resources are reticent with regard to discharging fully their obligations, while it can be seen that the vast majority of poor countries are conscientiously, and always with difficulty, striving to find the funds, which is no mean feat in their precarious economies.

At this crucial juncture in its life the United Nations must place special emphasis on equality and complementary between civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. Thus, even in the United Nations, we must not allow the concept of the sovereign equality of Member States to be impaired because of the responsibilities certain large States are assuming. The United Nations must contribute to the emergence of an international civil society.

Today, the poverty and want that are the lot of many underdeveloped countries are the most distressing factors of our civilization, and they are the true breeding grounds of tension and post-cold-war conflicts — by which I mean ethnic-religious clashes and their accompanying traffic in drugs and arms, corruption and money laundering.

With the end of the cold war, nation-States and civil societies have been given a historic opportunity to set in train the vast reform needed to change the lot of all mankind. This great reform is the key to preserving the still-fresh values of peace, justice and solidarity. For the United Nations it must be "the" challenge, the challenge of the next century whose advent we await with such anticipation.

To conclude, I should like to express the gratitude of Côte d'Ivoire to the specialized agencies present in our country. Their support and their dedication are greatly appreciated by all Ivorians. On behalf of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Henri Konan Bedie, I should like to tell them here how deeply gratified we are by the enormous task they have accomplished for our development.

The President: I thank the Prime Minster of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali.

His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Keita (*interpretation from French*): It is a great honour for me to speak in this Hall before the representatives of all the world's peoples to celebrate together the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This exceptional privilege affords me a timely opportunity to deliver, on behalf of the Republic of Mali, its people and its President, His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konaré, our Head of State, a message of hope: to see the

United Nations live up to the desire of twenty-first century man to live in peace and security, in social justice and human dignity.

How can we fail here to recall the action the Organization has taken to advance the cause of the self-determination of peoples, to eradicate colonialism and to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination and oppression? The United Nations has thus opened new horizons for many countries and peoples, enabling them to cooperate and to live in brotherhood within a community of interests and fortunes that inspires each people to devote its resources and energy to development, progress and prosperity.

Today, thanks to achievements of human intelligence and thought, the sense of insecurity is more often the product of the concerns of daily life than of the fear of some global cataclysm. Thus, the importance Mali attaches to the definition of a new social covenant that will put a higher priority on international solidarity, as President Alpha Oumer Konaré said in his statement at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

To that end we must readjust our thinking about the concept of development, putting greater stress on its human dimension. That is why we take pleasure in hailing the ongoing reform of United Nations organs, especially those responsible for economic and social development.

All these factors demonstrate that the United Nations is determined to promote a genuine culture of development by mankind and for mankind.

We regard the necessary enlargement of the Security Council, the rehabilitation of the role of the General Assembly and the streamlining of the Secretariat to be an expression of a greater democratization of the United Nations and a greater transparency of its bodies.

At the end of this century and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Organization is faced with an unprecedented situation, for it must confront, simultaneously, subtle and widespread challenges with many and complex implications. The task is a pressing and urgent one. We must act swiftly and in solidarity. Our collective future is at stake.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/215 B, I now call upon the next speaker, His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See.

His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See, was escorted to the rostrum.

Cardinal Sodano (*interpretation from French*): My presence in this Assembly just a few weeks after the visit of Pope John Paul II bears witness to the esteem of the Holy See for the United Nations. Over the past 50 years the United Nations has been the laboratory where certain aspects of international law have been refined as well as the stage for constant multilateral dialogue. It is also the centre where resolutions have been prepared and adopted to avoid conflicts or to resolve them by responsible mean — or yet again to meet the demands of human rights and solidarity. We must pay tribute to all those who have devoted themselves — at times even at the risk of their lives — to ensuring the triumph of law and international justice.

The United Nations has thus become an indispensable instrument of dialogue and solidarity among peoples. The Holy See believes that the action of the United Nations is irreplaceable for the support of countries in their efforts to strengthen peace, assure social progress and promote liberty.

In his address on 5 October the Holy Father expressed the wish that the Organization might grow as a moral centre, as a family of nations. It can realize this mission only if each State feels that it is accepted and recognized for what it is and is willing to give and take, and if all share the same heritage of values whose highest expressions remain the ideals of justice, freedom, peace and solidarity.

By its presence amongst you the Holy See desires to help give your Organization the spiritual vigour which will enable it more effectively to defend the principles of its fundamental Charter.

His Holiness recalled in this very Hall that

> "we do not live in an irrational and meaningless world"

but that

> "there is a moral logic which is built into human life and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 3)*

That is why the representatives of the Holy See who participate in your work strive to help ensure that the decisions made will always be governed by the objective good of all, especially of those peoples hardest hit by poverty, injustice or war, instead of being governed by selfish or nationalistic concerns or economic interests alone.

After 50 years of existence the United Nations is called upon to renew its commitments to the international community. It must find new ways to respond to today's challenges; an ethic of solidarity, a passion for peace, and the promotion of respect for differences.

In conclusion, I should like to thank you in the name of Pope John Paul II for the warm welcome you accorded him and for the attention you give to the work of our Observer Mission. The voice of the Holy Father and of his representatives has but one purpose: to remind everyone that the future of humanity depends in the final analysis on a willingness to live together. This is the meaning of that indispensable solidarity among brothers and sisters, all created in the image and likeness of God.

The President: I thank the Secretary of State of the Holy See for his statement.

His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Royal Highness Fahad Bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Council of Ministers of Oman

The President: I now call on His Royal Highness Fahad bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Council of Ministers of Oman.

His Royal Highness Fahad bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Council of Ministers of Oman, was escorted to the rostrum.

His Royal Highness Fahad bin Mahmoud Al Said (*interpretation from Arabic*): At this historic juncture, when we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations it is a great honour for me to take this opportunity to extend to you all our warm and sincere congratulations.

The Sultanate of Oman, under the dynamic leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has been fully aware, from the very beginning, of the crucial role undertaken by the United Nations since its inception in 1945 in establishing a new international world order based on the universal ideals of justice, equality and stability and in which development will be achieved at the economic and social levels.

Over the past twenty-five years, thanks to those ideals and objectives, which have always been the focal points of the country's policy at all levels, Oman has witnessed the most unprecedented level of economic resurgence ever achieved in its recent history, with particular focus on improving the skills and capabilities of the Omani citizen, the beneficiary and the maker of Oman's development. At the international level, my country, which remains committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and to the norms of international law, has cooperated with the international Organization in seeking to create an equitable international world order, in promoting the efforts aimed at consolidating peace and security and in spreading prosperity and stability in the world.

The principles of Oman's foreign policy and of its international relations are based on the constants of our beliefs and culture as well as on the common good of humanity. On this basis, my country has managed to resolve all outstanding issues with neighbouring countries by peaceful means on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Furthermore, Oman has effectively contributed to the peaceful settlement of many of the contentious global conflicts and has played an extensive role in international conferences and meetings held in order to reach a common understanding of international issues. Oman's participation, as a non-permanent member, in the activities of the Security Council, and its cooperation with other Member States in dealing with international challenges and conflicts have afforded Oman a good opportunity to play its proper role in international affairs with particular emphasis on addressing persistent problems in many parts of the world.

The past epoch of the United Nations history has been a period of many a positive achievement thanks to the effectiveness of multilateral action. The fact that the United Nations has been able to surmount the many great difficulties that stood in its path attests to the success of the Organization and its Member States. However, the achievement of peace, security, economic prosperity and social well-being on a basis of equality and justice will not be possible unless we strengthen our collective efforts and give priority to development plans on the individual and the collective levels.

In the light of the changed international priorities and concerns, the Organization has convened many an international conference to cope with the many problems that beset mankind, the most important of which are those relating to population, environment, development, desertification, drought, and other areas. If these problems are not dealt with seriously and solutions found for them, they will have the same devastating effects of world wars.

The new international order must be characterized by cooperation and should accord priority to finding solutions to the economic problems that face certain States. That is why it is opportune to undertake efforts to enable many countries of the world to use modern technology in developing their resources and improving their economies in the interest of their people.

It is an honour for me to have the opportunity, on behalf of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, to take part in this historic occasion which marks the beginning of a new era in the march of the world's peoples towards a better future.

In conclusion, I shall like to pay tribute, for their efforts, to the Secretaries-General who have successively managed the affairs of the United Nations as well as the staff of the United Nations from 1945 up to this day. Their pioneering efforts have been instrumental in making the mission of the United Nations successful.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs of Oman for his statement.

> *His Royal Highness Fahad bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Council of Ministers of Oman, was escorted from the rostrum.*

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta and former President of the General Assembly

The President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta and former President of the General Assembly.

> *His Excellency The Honourable Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta and former President of the General Assembly, was escorted to the rostrum.*

Mr. De Marco: The United Nations is a direct product of mankind's most bitter and cruellest experience: the Second World War. In establishing the United Nations, mankind sought to distance itself from the risks inherent in extreme nationalism to move to a higher plane of international action. More than an institution, the United Nations should be seen as a process encompassing mankind's deepest aspirations for global peace, human rights and democratic freedoms.

The past 50 years have both tested and reinvigorated the United Nations. At the institutional level, particular segments may have suffered, but in substance our Organization has resisted the impact of events and survived the challenges of change. At the operational level, the Organization is still struggling to confirm its credibility in fulfilling the aspirations of peoples and nations.

As much as a commemoration of the past, today's event is a dedication to the future.

Today mankind has the power to dominate and control much of the external environment. It has yet to refine those values which determine the use of this force.

Our time is marked by tragic contradictions. When the potential to produce food is practically unlimited, millions still suffer from malnutrition, and thousands of children die daily of starvation. When medicine can miraculously save lives and significantly extend life expectancy, millions needlessly fall victim to curable diseases because they are denied basic health care. When a growing portion of mankind rides together the electronic information highway, hatred and fear still separate communities and thousands are slaughtered in ethnic conflicts. When the holistic wonder of our globe can be seen and admired from outer space, irresponsible development still attacks and ravages the natural environment.

Within this perspective, institutional bickering fades into insignificance.

Ultimately, it is our unified support and political commitment to the principles and ideals enshrined in the Charter that determine the relevance, validity and effectiveness of our Organization.

The spreading of a poverty curtain, of which we warned five years ago, has become more pronounced and more ruthless. Our effort to consolidate human dignity is still eroded by the culture of death peddled by drug traffickers. Our intent to buttress the rule of law is still undermined by international crime.

Universality is the keystone of the United Nations. The notion of universality has consistently guided Malta's action within this Organization. It inspires our role in the pursuit of global and regional peace and cooperation. It underpinned our effort to promote and develop the concept of the common heritage of mankind in the context of the law of the sea and the concerns over climate change. It continues to motivate us in our role as guardians and trustees of the rights and interests of future generations by giving the Trusteeship Council the role of coordinating international efforts to maintain their legacy.

In our efforts to review the principal organs of the United Nations, the equal rights of nations, large and small, must be borne in mind.

We believe, and have always maintained, that there has to be a revitalization of the role of the General Assembly, the only organ in which we are all permanent members. In the restructuring of the Security Council, a symbiotic relationship between the Council and the General Assembly is of the essence.

These first 50 years have shown that the moral and political foundations of the United Nations are rooted in ideals and aspirations which go beyond a simple aggregate of membership and the search for pragmatic solutions to specific and immediate problems. The whole is more than the sum of its parts.

The founding fathers of the United Nations hitched their wagon to a star in charting the course of the future. This global vision rests and depends on the recognition of and respect for the rights, freedoms and dignity of each and every human being.

In building a second-generation United Nations, the main ingredients remain our will and commitment. This process requires our engagement to ensure the political and financial support for the Organization to act in order to have a world which is free from want and to ensure peace and freedom.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta and former President of the General Assembly of the United Nations for his statement.

His Excellency The Honourable Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta and former President of the General Assembly, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Al-Shara' *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations poses a legitimate question. The question is not about the world body's achievements to date, which have been important enough but, rather, about what should we do within the framework of the Organization in order for it to be able to build for mankind a better future in which there would be no place for aggression, occupation, justice, poverty or underdevelopment.

Since the end of the cold war, the international scene has been in a state of transition. No one can predict what this transition will lead to or when it will end as it is characterized by murkiness and instability.

This is a transition from a world order whose collapse left behind a great deal of rubble, many wars and several fundamental questions, to an alternative order that is still struggling to rise from under the rubble, still trying to find ways to put out the fires that continue to rage in many places, and trying to find answers to the many questions that have remained unanswered.

This is a daunting task and a heavy responsibility that no one individual State can successfully face up to, no matter how powerful or wise it may be. Rather, it requires collective sincere efforts by the Member States, efforts that should be immune against the mentality of the cold war and the ambitions of hegemony.

It is, therefore, our view that the United Nations continues to be the best framework for mobilizing such efforts and contributions in the face of present and future challenges. It would be wrong to believe that a new world order has risen already and has become a *fait accompli*, or that we have to either board the train or miss it. Syria, in the words of President Hafez Al-Assad, like many other States of the world, will not support an international order in which it has no role and no interest. Those who have followed the deliberations of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit held last week in Colombia, can clearly reach the same conclusion.

Consequently, we shall continue, together with developing countries and with others, to seek to contribute to the creation of a just international order that would recognize the equality between States and peoples and their right to dignity, freedom and development and put its faith in international cooperation based on mutual respect among States and the non-interference in their internal affairs.

This gathering, which brings together such a large number of Heads of State and Governments on this fiftieth anniversary, reflects two important facts. The first is that there is a state of general anxiety shared by both winners and losers in the aftermath of the cold war.

The second fact is that a unanimity has crystallized of late among the States of the world on the need to reform the United Nations, to render it more efficient in rising to present and future challenges.

Improvement of the performance of the United Nations and the democratization of decision-making within it, cannot be attained if the stronger and richer States impose their selfish interests at the expense of those of the overwhelming majority of the world's countries. It is the tendency to do just that which lies at the source of the genuine concern that has been generated by certain recent practices and experiences.

The decision in May of this year to indefinitely extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with the accompanying exceptions entrenching the monopoly of those possessing nuclear weapons and the pressures brought to bear on those who do not possess them and who sincerely wish to rid mankind of nuclear weapons, was the starkest proof of this tendency which highlights the dangers inherent in the duality of standards and concepts prevailing in contemporary international relations.

Since its creation, the United Nations has played an important role in decolonization and eliminating racism. It has scored great successes in this regard, the latest being the brilliant achievement in South Africa. In our region, however, Israel, despite paying lip service to peace, continues to occupy Arab lands, it continues to build settlements on those lands and continues to sow the seeds of resentment and hatred throughout the region.

It is no secret that Israel does not want the United Nations and refuses to give it a role in bringing peace to the Middle East. Thus, the United States peace initiative was the potential means to convince Israel to withdraw from all the Arab lands it occupied in 1967 in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as the land-for-peace formula.

After four years of negotiations, however, it has become clear that Israel used the American initiative, first to rid itself of the United Nations; second, to hamstring the American initiative itself; and, last but not least, to prevent the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Today, Israel's Government is trying to give the world the impression that it has gone a long way towards achieving peace and forging relations in our region, while the very peoples of the region — Arabs and Israelis alike — realize that peace is still out of reach. The real enemies of peace are those who annexed Al-Quds and the Golan; those who encouraged the continuation of occupation, colonial settlement and blind extremism; those who continue to reject complete withdrawal for complete and comprehensive peace as proposed by Syria and supported by the Arabs and the world.

If this opportunity for peace is lost — and we hope that it will not be — Israel will bear a heavy responsibility in the eyes of the world; the world that has, on this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, declared its strong yearning for comprehensive peace on the basis of justice and equality and for a better future for the peoples of our region and of the whole planet.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement.

> *His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arcb Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.*

Address by His Excellency Mr. Al-Habib ben Yahia, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Al-Habib ben Yahia, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia.

> *His Excellency Mr. Al-Habib ben Yahia, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

Mr. ben Yahia (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour to read the following message from His Excellency Zina el-Abidina ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia on this historic occasion:

> "At the time that the United Nations is commemorating its fiftieth anniversary, I take great pleasure on behalf of Tunisia in extending greetings to your august Assembly and in wishing you further success in what you are doing to strengthen this edifice that is our Organization, while consolidating its progress towards the realization of the aspirations of mankind and the ideals of peace, justice and the well-being of all, thanks to a convergence of views and a pooling of the efforts of all. Our highest hopes are to see solidarity and understanding triumph over dissension and conflict.
>
> "The United Nations has done a great deal in the service of peace since its establishment in the difficult times that followed in the wake of World War II. It has saved humanity from destruction and contributed to the emergence of the national liberation movement in various parts of the world. It has championed the advocates of fraternity and equality against the forces of injustice and every form of discrimination.
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> "Notwithstanding the difficulties that faced it, the United Nations has shown itself to be the very embodiment of human wisdom, and has demonstrated, through the many conventions, instruments and international machineries, and through its many outstanding efforts and activities in various areas, the great value of combining the soundness of its foundations with the loftiness of its objectives.
>
> "Our Organization has strengthened itself by establishing the many specialized bodies and agencies, to which it entrusted the responsibility of supporting national efforts in combating illiteracy, poverty and disease, in consolidation of the foundations of peace and international cooperation, and in search for the means of putting progress within the reach of all those who seek it.
>
> "That is why we pay special tribute to all those bodies and agencies of the Organization and renew our support for them in order for them to persevere in their humanitarian mission. Since independence, Tunisia has valued this mission of the United Nations, and has accorded to the principles embodied in the Organization's Charter a very high place in its national scale of values. In this, we have been inspired by our strong resolve to shoulder, within the context of United Nations activity, the responsibility of defending the cause of right and justice the world over.
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> "That was the reason why Tunisia was one of the first countries to respond to the late Dag Hammarskjöld's call to participate in the first United Nations peace-keeping operation ever, in the Congo. Five years after Tunisia's independence, the late Al-Mongui Selim, one of our outstanding diplomats, presided over the 16th session of the General Assembly and was thus the first son of Africa to hold that post.
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> "Proceeding from the choices of our people, we have striven, since November 1987, to promote those choices in line with humanity's ambition to uphold freedoms in their widest sense and in consonance with the belief that man was born free as the great reformers in our age-old civilization have taught us.
>
> "Thus while we are focused on consolidating the foundations of democracy at the national level and on institutionalizing respect for human rights at all levels, we have striven to spread the culture of tolerance and solidarity among our children — boys and girls alike. At the same time, we have spared

no effort in supporting every step taken by the United Nations to disseminate those values. We are determined to continue to deploy efforts in this direction in consonance with our belief that man's most worthy endeavour is that which aims at benefiting his fellow-man.

"We believe that mankind has embarked on a stage in its history that affords it unprecedented opportunities to achieve a level of constructive cooperation it has never attained before, especially after the end of bipolarity, and with the more effective communications technologies that are now available to it. We now have an opportunity to promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation between cultures and peoples in the interests of world peace.

"The international community is duty-bound to take advantage of these factors, and to forge them into useful tools in building a world order that would be based on peace, justice, equity and respect for law and international legality. This has been the purpose of our efforts in all international forums in consonance with the tendency enshrined in "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development", provided by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutro Boutros-Ghali.

"We in Tunisia are well aware of this concomitance of peace and development. The future of peace and democracy depends, both at the level of individual societies and at the level of various peoples, on our ability to respond to the exigencies of comprehensive and sustainable development at the national, regional and global levels.

"Proceeding from our belief that peace is not merely the prevention of armed conflict and the resolution of crises but is also the eradication of their root causes, we are of the opinion that the best way of doing that is to create a close link between development efforts, enlightenment, enshrinement of human rights and the values of democracy side by side with the virtues of tolerance and moderation.

"Tunisia is acutely aware of the threats posed to the safety of human society by terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, the deterioration of the environment, the spread of disease and the reappearance of certain pandemics and of the fact that such threats could never stop at the national boundaries of States. Proceeding from this awareness, we have spread no effort, especially during our Chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity, in trying to highlight the terrible consequences of these scourges, and in calling for the adoption of joint policies, at the regional level, to control them and stop their spread. We have also been striving, in the context of international institutions, to develop specific means of achieving worldwide coordination and cooperation to deal with and eradicate those scourges.

"These are enormous and urgent tasks, which no State can undertake on its own. They are the responsibility of the international community as a whole. Today, the international community has no choice but to combine its efforts, speedily and with the necessary efficacy, to maintain peace, stability and prosperity, while consolidating the positive changes which have been achieved the world over and from which humanity is entitled to expect dividends.

"No one can doubt that the United Nations is still the most appropriate means for the attainment of human solidarity in the context of a 'comprehensive contract of peace and development'. That is the thrust of the appeal we have been making from this rostrum. We did so in 1989, convinced as we were of the need to formulate and implement an international plan to deal with the scourge of worldwide poverty and hunger.

"There can be no doubt that our hopes for the United Nations and the responsibilities we assign to it make it incumbent upon us all to strive to ensure that its principles are abided by, to support its efforts and to strengthen its means of action. The Tunisia of the new era is convinced that the Organization is still very definitely the ideal framework to deal with international problems, safeguard peace and stability throughout the world and promote cooperation between nations for the benefit of all."

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ben Yahia, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Special Envoy of His Highness the Amir of the State of Bahrain

The President: I now call on His Excellency Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Special Envoy of His Highness the Amir of the State of Bahrain.

His Excellency Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Special Envoy of His Highness the Amir of the State of Bahrain, was escorted to the rostrum.

Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to address this international gathering today as the representative of His Highness Shaikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Amir of the State of Bahrain, and to convey to all participants His Highness the Amir's greetings and his sincere wishes for the success of this celebration and of the United Nations.

Our international Organization is commemorating, and with it we are celebrating, the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment in the wake of the Second World War which the international community and all peace-loving nations had resolved to make the last destructive war in the history of mankind. Through the Charter and noble principles of the United Nations, they determined to erase the consequences of that war and the destruction that it brought about.

On this occasion, of which we are all proud, and in the presence of this high-level assemblage, we express our gratitude for those who contributed to the creation of this international edifice through their distinguished thoughts and magnanimity and for those who, up to the present, have carried the banner or sacrificed their lives in the cause of security, peace and the promotion of justice, prosperity and stability for the peoples of the world.

Mr. Figueres Olsen (President of Costa Rica), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

The fact that this remarkable anniversary is taking place at a time when the human race is looking forward to a new century of civilization heightens its significance and places the great responsibility on us, States and peoples, of meeting this crossroads together in a manner commensurate with the challenges before us and the aspirations of all our peoples.

In an era fraught with developments and successive and accelerated changes, this anniversary serves as a timely opportunity for all the Governments and peoples of the world to reflect upon the performance, in terms of both its achievements and failures, of this 50-year-old Organization. It is also an occasion for all of them to present their visions and thoughts on how the Organization can best evolve to cope with the world's enormous political, economic, social and cultural events and changes, while drawing object-lessons from the missteps and pitfalls of the past by seeking to restructure the United Nations so as to allow it to keep pace with the age.

To that end, efforts should be made to reinvigorate the General Assembly, in which all Member States are represented. Moreover, the Security Council's effectiveness should be enhanced through the expansion of its membership and the implementation of every means of improving its efficiency. In that context, it is also crucial that we strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council in order to allow it to function effectively in promoting the welfare of all peoples. It is neither reasonable nor acceptable that one-fifth of the world's population of approximately 6 billion should continue to live in abject poverty. Concerted efforts are therefore essential to address this problem. Social and economic well-being and freedom from hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment are fundamental if prosperity is to be attained.

The United Nations has passed many a test and has demonstrated, since its establishment, that it is quite capable of surmounting crises and facing up to any challenge that contravenes the principles of its Charter and runs counter to its noble objectives. One of the most outstanding achievements of the United Nations has been its success in putting an end to colonialism and to apartheid. The Organization's activities in the area of maintaining peace and security in the world are increasing and there seems to be general support for the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his "An Agenda for Peace", as discussions in the General Assembly, the Security Council and other bodies have shown, in particular with respect to efforts to encourage the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and to prevent conflicts in the framework of preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peace-building. The world now yearns for a new age of peace and comprehensive development.

Both the State of Bahrain, whose national independence was associated with the positive role of the United Nations in enabling peoples to enjoy self-determination, and the Gulf region, which a few years ago witnessed the formation of the greatest international alliance in history to deter aggression and uphold international legality, are living testimony to our international Organization's success in achieving stability and peace in a vital region of the world, whose security requires respect for existing boundaries at all times and commitment to the norms and principles of international legality at all levels. There is no doubt that the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, with the participation of all parties, will be one of the United Nations most important achievements.

The future of the United Nations depends now more than ever on the extent of its ability to influence events and to mould the future, especially in an era of accelerating change and development influenced by the dramatic communications revolution in the world. If this Organization is to carry out its task of peacemaking and ensuring the prevalence of justice, it behoves us, peoples and Governments alike, to present the twenty-first century with a United Nations capable of promoting the causes of justice, development and equality for all.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Special Envoy of His Highness, the Amir of the State of Bahrain, for his statement.

His Excellency Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Special Envoy of His Highness, the Amir of the State of Bahrain, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Dawa Tsering, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Dawa Tsering, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan.

His Excellency Mr. Dawa Tsering, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Tsering: I have the honour to convey to the President of the General Assembly, and through him to all representatives, the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, for the success of the Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations.

My delegation is proud to join the other nations of the world in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The fact that so many Heads of State and Government are here today is eloquent testimony to the importance of the United Nations in the life of the international community.

The Kingdom of Bhutan has always remained a sovereign, independent nation throughout its long history, although we too have suffered at the hands of an imperial Power. The unique Mahayana Buddhist civilization which flourished in the Himalayas from the seventh century A.D. onwards, and of which Bhutan is the last remaining bastion, has enriched the lives of our people and given strength and resilience to our society down the ages. Every Bhutanese is proud of his rich cultural heritage and pristine natural environment. Although Bhutan is a small, underdeveloped country, difficult of access, landlocked and mountainous, we do possess profound spiritual truths and traditional knowledge in alternative medicine which we wish to share with the rest of the world. We are also keen to make our own modest contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the promotion of the unity, friendship and well-being of the entire human family.

The United Nations means different things to different nations around the globe. It is only natural that we should view the world through our own perspective, influenced by our historical experience, geographical setting, traditions and value system, and compulsions arising out of the aspirations of our people for political and cultural survival. For a small nation like Bhutan, membership of the United Nations enables us to participate in shaping the international agenda on numerous issues that are of importance to our people, ranging from population, environment, poverty, disarmament and social development to protection of cultural heritage. We benefit from the activities of the United Nations family of organizations, whose assistance has made a real difference in the everyday lives of our people.

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is an occasion, not only of joy and celebration, but also of thought and reflection. The achievements of the United Nations are far too numerous to belittle. Whether as an instrument of peaceful change in ideologies and political systems during the past 50 years, or as a formulator of international principles and standards on a wide range of matters, of which the Charter is the centrepiece, its achievements are impressive by any yardstick. The United Nations has helped to mould the international agenda on numerous issues and given legitimacy to many new doctrines and ideas. The end of the cold war gives us hope that we can build on the shared norms and values of the United Nations and strive for higher standards in international relations in order to achieve collective security and socio-economic development in a better-ordered world.

On the historic occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, as the world reflects on the past half century and looks to the future, it is fitting to review the case for reforming and restructuring the United Nations. Its present structure and distribution of powers was conceived 50 years ago when it had a membership of only some 50 countries. Since then, the membership has nearly quadrupled. However, the interests of the vast majority of the members are not represented in the Security Council, which is the only body of any real authority within the system. In our view, the reform of the United Nations must begin with the expansion of the Security Council so that it will represent the interests of all countries equally, and not just those of a privileged few. It is only fair and just that more equitable representation of developing countries and deserving candidates which have emerged since 1945 should now be accommodated.

Bhutan believes that on the basis of any objective criteria Japan, one of the foremost economic powers of the world today, would qualify for permanent membership, and among developing countries India's candidature for permanent membership merits equal consideration. Apart from the fact that it has a population comprising one-sixth of mankind, a large economy with enormous potential for rapid growth, an impressive track record of valuable contributions to shaping the United Nations' agenda on vital issues and participation in major United Nations peace-keeping operations, and the ability to assume full obligations arising from permanent membership, India's case also merits serious consideration on the basis of balanced geographical representation and equitable representation of developing countries.

In our view, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is also an opportune time for us to reorganize its other organs, particularly the General Assembly and its committees, to overcome its present inadequacies and shortcomings through a process of restructuring and revitalization, so that our Organization can become more efficient and result-oriented to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Dawa Tsering, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Honourable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, M.P., Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya.

His Excellency The Honourable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, M.P., Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Musyoka: The founders of the United Nations were inspired, by their strong will, to overcome the terrible experiences of the two world wars to create a world Organization which would ensure that such experiences would not recur. They were inspired by their sensitivity to the human suffering resulting from destruction by the wars to undertake ambitious reconstruction programmes which turned around the prospects for Europe within 10 short years.

They were similarly inspired to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration against colonialism, in support of the right of self-determination of the peoples in the colonized territories.

On this occasion, we can state with confidence that the Organization has succeeded in the prevention of a third world war; that it has drastically reduced inter-state armed conflicts; that it has made much progress in the codification of international law; that it has provided a conducive climate and means for the reconstruction of Europe; that it has almost completed the mission of decolonization; and that it has withstood the cold war.

The Organization has also done well in the coordination of international action to deal with disasters, eradication and containment of diseases, and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.

The end of the cold war, however, has been followed by an unprecedented explosion of internal conflicts unleashed by the rise of ethnic and religious nationalism. The size and complexity of some of these conflicts have led to disintegration of some Member States of this Organization. The absence of a delegation from Somalia eloquently testifies to this fact.

The United Nations has responded to the conflicts with peace-keeping operations in virtually all regions of the world. Recent experiences have exposed the strengths and weaknesses of the Organization in this critical area.

Equally disquieting is the current trend towards abandonment of support for both bilateral and multilateral development programmes. It had been expected that the end of the cold war would result in huge savings from defence budgets to be applied to development financing. However, what we are witnessing now, five years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, is an unprecedented withdrawal of development support by the developed countries.

The Organization has addressed the socio-economic challenges through, among others, conferences on: population, social development, the child, women, human rights, the environment, and human settlements. Plans of action adopted by these conferences are, however, seriously undermined by the withdrawal of effective support by the developed countries.

Like the founders of the United Nations, we, as today's leaders, should take full cognizance of the inseparable relationship between peace and development. We must give impetus to our Organization to enhance its capabilities in, among other fields: first, peaceful resolution of conflicts; second, mobilizing international support for socio-economic development and the worldwide eradication of poverty; third, strengthening the productive capacity and competitiveness of the developing countries, especially in Africa; and lastly, the progressive development and application of international law.

The United Nations, like any other Organization, needs a sound financial base in order to carry out its mandate effectively. In this regard, we urge Member States to honour their Charter obligations by paying their assessed contributions in full and, whenever possible, on time.

May I borrow words spoken from this very rostrum by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, as follows:

> "The United Nations needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and become a moral centre where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a family of nations ... In an authentic family the strong do not dominate ..." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 5)*

As we move into the next millennium, the United Nations family should be guided by the spirit of its Charter. No member of the family need be left behind, provided we are all ever mindful of one another's needs and sensibilities.

I would have concluded at this point, but in view of a statement made this morning I am compelled to exercise my right of reply. President Bizimungu took advantage of this solemn occasion to drag Kenya into Rwandan problems by making an unprovoked attack on Kenya's Head of State. Kenya firmly refuses to be drawn into Rwandan problems. We have stated time and again that Kenya will cooperate with the Tribunal for Rwanda to ensure that justice is applied to all. In this regard, Kenya has consistently held the view that the root causes of the Rwandan problems need to be addressed comprehensively. It is extremely important that the events preceding the genocide, particularly the shooting down of the plane which killed the Presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi in April 1994, thus triggering genocide, be investigated and the culprits punished for their crimes.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya for his statement.

His Excellency The Honourable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, M.P., Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mouzaoir Abdallah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mouzaoir Abdallah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros.

His Excellency Mr. Mouzaoir Abdallah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Abdallah (*interpretation from French*): I should like at the outset to join my voice with those of the speakers who preceded me in congratulating Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his well-deserved election to the presidency of this historic session commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization.

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is a historic occasion, on which we wish to express our satisfaction at the indisputable role that the Organization plays in all the areas of present international relations.

We pay resounding tribute to the free nations that founded the United Nations, an Organization that has become, over the years, a global political arena that is essential to the *rapprochement* of peoples.

The role of the Organization of the United Nations in decolonization, advances in international law, respect for human rights and the identification of certain major problems such as those relating to population and the environment illustrate the growing accomplishments and the progress of our Organization.

The people of the Comoros will not forget that it is thanks to the United Nations that the legal battle relating to the boundaries of the Republic of the Comoros was won on 12 November 1965, four months after our independence.

As regards peace, solidarity and the right of peoples to a life of dignity and prosperity, much remains to be done.

As to the implementation of new development strategies to bring about a more just and equitable international economic order, we are obliged to note that the gulf continues to widen between rich and poor countries. We also note with regret that despite efforts at adjustment and at economic and financial recovery, the debt burden and the rigidity of its regulation weigh heavily on our countries.

A new approach to the repayment of this debt must be sought, out of a twofold concern for humanity and solvency. The United Nations must strive towards this, otherwise small countries such as mine are likely to be excluded completely from the broad movement of hope, responsibility and creativity that is now taking shape and in which we firmly believe.

The act of aggression perpetrated against the Republic of Comoros on the night of 27 to 28 September wounded my country and plunged it into mourning, thus aggravating an already precarious economic and social situation. I would urgently appeal, from this lofty rostrum, that everything be done to put an end to the criminal acts of destruction by mercenaries through determined, uncompromising and stringent international legislation.

I should like to take this solemn opportunity to convey to the international community the profound gratitude of the Government of the National Union of Transition, headed by His Excellency Mr. Caabi Elyachroutu, and of the people of Comoros for its support and sympathy for my country during this tragic and painful ordeal.

At this stage, I should like to reiterate our sincere thanks to the Government and the people of France. Allow me also to convey to His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, the high esteem in which the people of the Comoros hold him for the interest he shows in developing the ties of friendship that link our two countries.

The determined intervention by an élite unit of the French Army during the night of 3 October last, pursuant to the defence accords that link the Comoros and France and at the request of Prime Minister Caabi Elyachroutu, made it possible to restore constitutional order.

Lastly, I should like to pay heartfelt tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, our brother, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the decisive action he took at the request of the Organization of African Unity and of countries friendly to the Comoros, which included the United States of America, in the very first hours of the aggression committed against my country. The Comorian people will not forget this.

On the eve of the third millennium, my country expresses the hope that the United Nations will become the forum for convergence and arbitration of a world that needs to replenish and revitalize itself, on the basis of the universal values of generosity, solidarity and peace, of which it is the worthy and legitimate guarantor.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Mouzaoir Abdallah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Najibullah Lafraie, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Najibullah Lafraie, Minister for Foreign Affairs and State of Afghanistan.

His Excellency Mr. Najibullah Lafraie, Minister for Foreign Affairs and State of Afghanistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Lafraie: I am especially privileged to make this statement on behalf of His Excellency Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, while reminding the world family of the efforts made over the last 50 years to achieve global peace and stability and to ensure human rights and economic and social progress, also offers us an opportunity to meticulously re-evaluate the extent to which we, the peoples of the United Nations, have fulfilled our commitments to ensure respect for the provisions of the Charter.

The objectives and goals enshrined in the Charter are indicative of the common interest in peace, stability, democracy and human rights, in preference to the illegitimate strategic goals of those enjoying better military and economic capabilities.

It is a fact that all Member States share responsibility for the aforementioned principles. However, the prevailing international mechanism grants a comparatively better status to the major Powers than to other States. Thus, their resolve to remain loyal to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to serve international peace, stability and economic development is even more vitally important.

Afghanistan, a former Member of the League of Nations, became a Member of the United Nations as early as 1946. It has all along remained loyal and committed to the principles of the United Nations. However, when Afghanistan was invaded by the Red Army of the former Soviet Union in 1979, the United Nations did very little to repulse the aggression. We are grateful to the United Nations General Assembly for overwhelmingly condemning the aggression. The Security Council, however, remained completely inactive. The reason was that the former Soviet Union, a permanent member of the Council, could use its veto power against any decision of the Council.

That is why we, as a non-aligned country, share the views expressed by other Member States with an emphasis on the need for the democratization, transparency and reform of the Security Council, including the revision of the right of veto, which we consider as the tyranny of the minority over the majority. The veto rule can be replaced by the requirement of a two-thirds majority.

We are all well aware of the enormous sufferings of the Afghan people during the years of Soviet occupation. The question is why war-stricken Afghanistan is again facing foreign conspiracies and plots stirring national and ethnic hatred among its people. Is this not a crime against humanity? Does it not clearly exemplify the violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of others? Do the circles in the neighbouring country who finance, arm and train the band of the so-called Taliban know what they stand for? They should know that they stand for extremism and obscurantism. They believe in violence and negate every single principle of democracy and human rights. This is in contrast to the Islamic State of Afghanistan, which has all along proved its commitment to democracy, human rights and peaceful coexistence with others, especially its neighbours, and has campaigned against terrorism, extremism and narcotic drugs.

I should like to bring to the attention of the world community the fact that right at this moment, a foreign-engineered conspiracy has once again channelled the Taliban mercenaries to the gates of the capital, Kabul. The aim is to impose by force and violence a puppet clique against the will of our people. It is very unfortunate that the world is standing a silent spectator witnessing the further devastation of an already war-torn Afghanistan.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan will continue to defend its national sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right of its people to determine their own future. We consider dialogue and negotiation within the framework of the United Nations peace efforts headed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General as the best means to achieve a lasting peace in the country.

We earnestly expect the international community to render support for the cause of peace and the prevention of further killing and destruction in Afghanistan.

Each and every document of the United Nations talks about respecting the right to life, liberty and security, as well as the will of nations. During this Special Commemorative Meeting, the world leaders have also presented speeches about the future of the world and the ways and means of implementing the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which would remain merely beautiful expressions unless translated into practice. Let us not forget, however, that at this very moment millions of human beings go on living in poverty, hunger and deprivation and without any access to primary health care and basic education.

In spite of all these miseries inflicted on the majority of our human family, thousands of millions of dollars are being spent each year on the production of new and sophisticated weapons for the annihilation of our very lives.

Considering the fact that the end of polarization and the cold war should bring considerable reductions in militarization, is it not time, on such a glorious occasion, to commit ourselves to donate just a small portion of these unnecessary expenditures to the most impoverished countries of our world family?

Finally, let us pray to God Almighty for a successful common endeavour to see the United Nations as a more just world Organization serving as the beacon of hope for the human family.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and State of Afghanistan for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Najibullah Lafraie, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, Chairman of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Daudi Ngelauta Mwakawago, Chairman of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

His Excellency Mr. Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, Chairman of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President returned to the Chair.

Mr. Mwakawago: It is a signal honour and privilege to address this Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on behalf of my Head of State and Government. Let me at the outset pay tribute to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, and allow me also to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his dedicated service to the world.

The United Republic of Tanzania, in more ways than one, is a product of the good work of the United Nations. The mainland, Tanganyika, was a trusteeship Territory from 1945 to 1961, having assumed that status after the collapse of the League of Nations. But even Zanzibar, which is the other component of the Union, enjoyed the support of the Organization in its quest for liberation as a Protectorate under the British.

Thus, these celebrations are Tanzania's celebrations. We join other similar States in paying tribute to the United Nations for the sterling work it has done on decolonization.

The United Nations has done more than achieve decolonization. Its work in many countries of the world, especially in the South, is seen through its various agencies.

As we meet today, we look back on 50 years of illustrious history. But the main objective is to focus on the future. The Organization needs revitalization. One area is to democratize its structures, especially the Security Council, so that they reflect current realities, both in terms of membership and the scope of the issues before the world body. It is imperative that equitable geographical representation be at the centrepiece of reforms.

The second area of concern is development. The Assembly has heard addresses from many leaders. There is a resounding call for increased resources and a frontal attack on poverty. The scourge of poverty and environmental degradation is the new war facing the United Nations. It cannot be wished away or left to the developing countries to fight it. It requires the efforts and solidarity of the international community through the leadership of the United Nations.

The third imperative of our time is South-South cooperation. Although there is so much talk of the globalization of the economy, unless the South gets its act together, it will not enjoy the benefits of globalization. Some countries in the South, especially in Asia and Latin America, have made very significant progress. Their experience and expertise are not only relevant, but can help to spearhead development in the South at a pace commensurate with their traditions and values. The United Nations has a role to play in facilitating that cooperation. I need hardly emphasize that the development of the South is negatively affected by the huge debt burden, a question that requires an urgent response by the creditor nations and institutions.

Tanzania has followed the peace-keeping process with keen interest. We believe the success stories are there for everyone to see. None the less, it is my delegation's view that the mandates need looking into. In recent years there have been so many contradictions that have tarnished the image of the United Nations.

Lastly, the Rwanda and Burundi developments have been debated here at length. But it is very clear to my delegation that whatever steps will be taken to deal with the conflict, it is absolutely necessary to address the question of the return of the refugees to their countries of origin. Failure to do so will only breed more conflicts in the future. Tanzania has over one million refugees from the two neighbouring countries. It is a huge burden on a poor least developed country.

In conclusion, we reiterate our faith in the United Nations, since it is the one universal institution where we all belong, big or small, wealthy or poor. The United Nations is us — its Members. It does not exist apart from us. We can make it strong, or weaken it by our actions of commission or omission.

It is my delegation's view that a fitting gift to the Organization on this occasion is for all its Members to live by the tenets of the Charter.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, Chairman of the Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Robert Millette, Chairman of the Delegation of Grenada

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Robert Millette, Chairman of the Delegation of Grenada.

His Excellency Mr. Robert Millette, Chairman of the Delegation of Grenada, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Millette: As we celebrate the golden years of the United Nations the words of the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu come to mind: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

Several important meetings, conferences and debates preceded the official launching of the United Nations on 24 October 1945 in San Francisco.

The meeting that took place somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean between President Roosevelt of the United States of America and Prime Minister Churchill of the United Kingdom, on 14 August 1941, resulted in a declaration of principles known as the Atlantic Charter. This Charter expressed the hope:

> "to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want".

The impact of human destruction was significant and demanded a reassurance among nations to find alternative approaches to conflict resolution and peacemaking, and a firm commitment to maintain world peace and security.

On 30 October 1943 in Moscow, the foreign ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and China proclaimed that their

Governments recognized the need to establish a general international organization based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership by all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Some refer to the United Nations as the biggest debating society in the world, in which perception takes precedence over substance, rhetoric over reality — a Tower of Babel where debates consist of grotesque rituals and recurrent irrelevancies.

The truth of the matter is that the United Nations, as a relatively young institution, is the quintessential example of humanity's struggle for peace among nations and within nations. It bears the marks of humanity's triumphs and failures. However, in the pursuit of peace, the United Nations continues, to paraphrase Isaiah, "to run and not be weary, to walk and not grow faint". From the first meeting of the General Assembly in London on 10 January 1946, with a membership then of 51 nations, to today's commemorative celebration at United Nations Headquarters with a membership of 185 nations, the United Nations continues to proclaim loud and clear its mission of peace initiatives in world health, human rights, education and the environment.

Since the end of the cold war several democracies have emerged, resulting in a more democratic world. Surely, we have to support those democracies, assist those countries that are in the process of building democratic structures, and encourage those that are yet to embrace the democratic principles.

While we applaud the gains of the last 50 years, we seek to find solutions to such problems as drug trafficking, regional and ethnic conflicts, debt burdens, barriers to trade, international terrorism, and environmental threats. What does this mean for small States like Grenada? What are the implications of these challenges to the survival and security of small States?

We must not be discouraged. Rather, we must assist the United Nations as it responds to the new economic and political realities of world peace and international development.

As we seek to restructure and position the United Nations for the twenty-first century, we must use new technology to support the social and economic development of large and small States. Small States look to the United Nations for assistance in information technology and human resource development. This assistance will result in social and economic progress and thereby enable us — the small States — to attract capital and investment.

The Security Council should reflect the new economic and political realities. Greater emphasis should be placed on improving the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations in peace-keeping and peacemaking and, all the more so, on efforts towards regional peace-keeping.

We see the United Nations as a forum for coordinating issues relating to world peace. To that end, we would wish to see the United Nations agencies work in close collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions and with other intergovernmental agencies to implement social and economic development programmes.

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is a time for reflection on the principles of its Charter. We must ask ourselves whether we have adhered to the principles of the Charter, whether we have truly embraced the principle of universality.

Mr. President, Grenada concurs with your position on the principle of universality as stated in the Charter of the United Nations. In that light, we bring once again to the attention of the international community the exclusion of the Republic of China from this world Organization since 1971. We deem this a great loss to the United Nations and urge the opening of dialogue as a first step in finding a solution to this problem.

We remain confident that a new United Nations will work assiduously to achieve the goals set out and accomplish the tasks before it. We, the Member States, are committed to the United Nations as it continues in its efforts to ensure peace and security for the world in which we live.

On behalf of the Prime Minister of my country, Grenada, and on behalf of my people, I thank you.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Delegation of Grenada for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Robert Millette, Chairman of the Delegation of Grenada, was escorted from the rostrum.

Adoption of the draft resolution (A/50/48, para. 2)

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations (A/50/48)

Draft resolution (A/50/48, para. 2)

The President: Before I call on the next speaker, we shall first proceed to consider the draft resolution which appears in paragraph 2 of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations and which contains the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations (document A/50/48).

I should like to inform Members that after action is taken on the Declaration we shall hear the 11 remaining speakers for the Special Commemorative Meeting. The Secretary-General and I will make closing statements thereafter.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Richard Butler, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations and Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, to introduce the report of the Preparatory Committee.

Mr. Butler (Australia), Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations: It is an honour for me, Sir, to serve under your presidency.

I now report to the General Assembly as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. As one of the inventors of the five-minute rule, I will be brief: I will make only five points.

First, in all of our work we have been assisted by an utterly superb Secretariat of the United Nation,s and I want this to be heard in particular outside this Hall. I am thinking especially of Mrs. Sorensen and her fiftieth anniversary Secretariat team. Secondly, this international community has agreed on the text of a Declaration for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It is the text in document A/50/48. Thirdly, we have discharged our responsibility. We have produced a Declaration which reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and our commitments to them. We have produced a Declaration, a text on the future, which will have meaning for the peoples of this world. Fourthly, this is a document that will serve us well, in particular through its guidelines for future cooperation amongst all nations. And, fifthly, in itself this Declaration represents a major act of cooperation. I will always be grateful for having been able to be a part of its creation. I thank all of you deeply for your hard work and for your friendship.

I commend to the Assembly this Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

May I take it that it is the wish of members that the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations contained in the draft resolution that appears in paragraph 2 of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations be adopted by the General Assembly at its Special Commemorative Meeting by acclamation?

That being the case, I invite representatives to stand for the adoption of the Declaration by acclamation.

The Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations was adopted by acclamation.

Continuation of statements

The President: We shall now hear the remaining speakers.

Address by Mr. Nikenike Vurobaravu, Deputy Secretary-General of the South Pacific Forum

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on Mr. Nikenike Vurobaravu, Deputy Secretary-General of the South Pacific Forum.

Mr. Nikenike Vurobaravu, Deputy Secretary-General of the South Pacific Forum, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Vurobaravu: It is a great honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the South Pacific Forum at this Special Commemorative Meeting in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Forum is new to the United Nations process, having been admitted as Observer only last year. But like many of the previous distinguished speakers, we are deeply committed to the ideals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Previous speakers have described more eloquently the record and achievements of the United Nations since its inception 50 years ago. The vision on which the United Nations was built — peace, human dignity, justice, economic and social progress — will be as valid in the next 50 years as it was in the last 50. And, in an increasingly complex and interdependent world, the role of the United Nations in pursuing that vision is of more and more importance to small countries, such as those of the South Pacific Forum. The existence and programmes of the United Nations help guarantee our peace and security, and promote our economic and social development in ways we are too small to manage entirely for ourselves.

We applaud, therefore, the expanded and invigorated role that the United Nations is playing in the post-cold-war world. While our own South Pacific region is, thankfully, free from the sort of local conflict still far too prevalent in other parts of the world, we fully support the development of the peace-keeping and peacebuilding role of the United Nations. The Forum particularly welcomes the progress towards real nuclear disarmament that has been possible in the new international environment. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons a few months ago was a major step forward. Even more important is the prospect of conclusion next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which would ban all nuclear tests in all environments for all time. It is vital, if the world is to achieve the objectives of peace and security embodied in the United Nations Charter, that this opportunity to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty be seized.

In this context, however, I must echo the Forum's deep disappointment and concern at the resumption this year of nuclear testing in the Pacific. This testing poses a serious threat to the welcome positive developments of nuclear disarmament to which I have referred, to our Pacific environment, to the health of Pacific peoples and to the ideals of the United Nations to which we are all here this week to lend our fullest support. Therefore, the Forum welcomes the recent announcement by the United States, Britain and France that they intend to support the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, and we look forward to their early signing of its Protocols.

The Charter of the United Nations also recognizes that to attain the primary objective of maintaining peace and security the deep-seated economic and social causes of international instability must be addressed. The economic development of its small island members is of the highest priority for the Forum. Increasingly, this calls for attention to the environmental sustainability of the development process, as pressure grows — not least from problems like climate change, which require a concerted international approach — on our small, fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

A major factor in the Forum's decision to seek observer status at the General Assembly was the growing role of the United Nations in addressing sustainable-development issues. Forum countries have participated actively in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro and its follow-up, in the Commission on Sustainable Development, in the negotiations on climate change and so on. These are areas where we look forward to a continuing increase in the role of the United Nations.

On this note, let me conclude by joining previous speakers in congratulating the United Nations on its achievements and by stating that the countries of the South Pacific Forum are united in their support for the United Nations ideals and activities. We look forward to its next 50 years.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General of the South Pacific Forum for his statement.

Mr. Nikenike Vurobaravu, Deputy Secretary-General of the South Pacific Forum, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call upon the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community.

His Excellency Mr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Carrington: It is my signal honour as Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to be afforded the opportunity to address this body on the historic occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I should like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and, through him, to the United Nations, for this privilege.

Today, 50 years following the signing of the Charter creating the United Nations, the Organization still represents mankind's greatest hope for peace, development and international cooperation. Indeed, as the United Nations celebrates this milestone anniversary, it has much to be proud of, particularly in the promotion of peace and security, democracy and human rights, economic and social development, the rights of women, the rights of children and justice throughout the world.

In the field of economic and social development the United Nations has been the source of much of the vision and inspiration for the formation of the institutional arrangements and mechanisms which have facilitated the development of the emerging nations of the post-war era. The Caribbean Community is a grouping of such nations. Although it represents a mere 13 of the United Nations 185 Members and an even smaller proportion of its peoples, CARICOM has been an active contributor to the fulfilment of the ideals of the Organization. Strategically located between North and South America and historically linked to Europe, Africa and Asia, CARICOM is a virtual microcosm of our global community. Its fundamental objective of enhancing the economic, social and cultural development of its peoples through regional cooperation, consultation and coordination in an environment of democratic practice and respect for human rights makes CARICOM's mission an integral part of the overall purpose of the United Nations.

Of particular significance to the States members of the Caribbean Community has been the contribution of the United Nations to recognizing the equal sovereign status of nations while promoting the special needs of the least developed and small nation States. The unanimous selection, for example, of one of our nationals to preside for the first time over a session of the General Assembly, its forty-eighth, and the convening in one of our member States of the highly significant United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States were recent and invaluable demonstrations of this recognition, which also afforded CARICOM the welcome opportunity to be of further service to the international community.

As the United Nations prepares for the future on the very eve of a new century, and, indeed, a new millennium, it is challenged to play an even more decisive role in our rapidly changing political, economic and cultural landscape. To do so, the United Nations will without doubt need to be reformed to provide, particularly, for more equitable representation and decision-making. The Secretary-General's proposals in "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" offer an encouraging platform from which the United Nations can seek to launch its efforts to meet the challenges of the future and fulfil the highest aspirations of its membership.

We in the Caribbean Community stand ready to play our part, particularly through intensified cooperation with the United Nations, sensitive as we are to the importance of its contribution to the improvement of the human condition in our Community, a condition threatened by poverty, unemployment, degradation of the environment, narco-trafficking and the vagaries of nature.

CARICOM has long been firmly of the view that the response to these challenges lies in great measure in regional and international cooperation. For this reason, our member States have, over the past 22 years, sought through these means to advance and improve the standard of life of the peoples of our small, vulnerable economies and societies. The experience gained, although at times daunting, has nevertheless strengthened our conviction and resolve to intensify our efforts at such cooperation.

It is this conviction that led us recently to enlarge the hitherto English-speaking Caribbean Community to include Suriname, a Dutch-speaking country. It is this conviction that led us to broaden our horizons for regional cooperation through the recent establishment of the Association of Caribbean States, membership of which is open to all the States, countries and Territories of the Caribbean basin.

It is this same conviction that has led us to seek and obtain from the United Nations a commitment for closer cooperation, a recent demonstration of which was the adoption in October 1991 of General Assembly resolution 46/8, granting observer status to the Caribbean Community, and it is this same conviction of the value and efficacy of regional and international cooperation that reenforces the faith of the Caribbean Community, particularly as a grouping of small nation States, in the United Nations and its future.

We in CARICOM are therefore proud to add our voice to that of the international community in extending congratulations to the United Nations on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary and, in so doing, to pledge our continuing strong support for the ideals and aspirations of the United Nations in the years ahead.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity.

His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Salim: Fifty years ago the world emerged from the ashes of a devastating war to found the United Nations. It was a world rediscovering its common humanity and destiny after the division, hatred and destruction of the war. In the new Organization, the world saw an opportunity to recreate society, rebuild the bonds of human solidarity, work together, promote understanding and cooperation, correct the wrongs of the past and create a new world order, founded on freedom and justice, in which humanity was at peace with itself and forswore war.

Despite the determination and efforts of the United Nations in the last 50 years, the world has not been without conflict and war, or without injustice, oppression and the doubt which they have at times engendered. As the world has gone through its cyclical changes, the United Nations has seen violence, human suffering, injustice, poverty, racism and wars. In the attempts to respond to its global mission of peace and socio-economic development, the United Nations has applied itself seriously and made a difference to many. In its involvement in the maintenance of international peace and security, in fostering socio-economic development and in promoting human rights, the Organization has made its mark on our global society.

The work of its specialized agencies and programmes has brought development and humanitarian assistance to the more needy of this world. Yes, the United Nations has had its share of difficulties and shortcomings. Yet, notwithstanding these shortcomings and, not least, those difficulties thrust upon it by the limitations and actions of its Member States, it is still an Organization which in its universal character embodies the world's peoples, who are yearning to embrace each other in a partnership of understanding and cooperation. Thanks to the United Nations, we have witnessed more than human deprivation, suffering and wars; we have also witnessed human generosity, compassion, courage, gallantry and sacrifice.

Fifty years ago a free Africa, liberated from colonialism and racial bigotry, was only a concept to many and a distant dream even to the optimistic internationalists among those who met in San Francisco to draw up the Charter of our United Nations. To the Organization of African Unity and Africa as a whole, therefore, the United Nations has been an instrument of liberation. Today Africa is free and apartheid has been relegated to history, thanks, to a great extent, to the joint struggle coming from within the United Nations. In the United Nations, the world's opposition to colonialism and racism found convergence and a concrete expression of global partnership for change. That partnership made the difference, and the liberation of Africa is a reality we now live.

As Africa now faces the future, one in which the challenge of human development is growing ever more urgent, we shall continue to need the solidarity and support of the United Nations. To sustain that spirit of global human solidarity inherent in the United Nations system, we must renew our confidence in this Organization, overcome our doubts and defeat some Member States' sentiments of isolation, which now seem to be slowly undermining the spirit of internationalism embodied in the United Nations.

Equally, as we face the future, Africa being mainly a continent of small and developing countries, we see the continent as one with the United Nations in the global search for equality and peace and in promoting human development. In this world which has more often than not tended to gravitate towards the unilateralism of the powerful, Africa can only continue to find security in the collective of the United Nations.

The new changes which have taken place in the world system are presenting new challenges. The United Nations is being tested, and it has to adjust. But for it to do so effectively, its Member States must renew their faith in our shared humanity. To strengthen the United Nations, bridges of cooperation and understanding must span the full breadth of this globe. We must rekindle the spirit of the founding fathers.

This is a celebration of global solidarity and cooperation. It is a commemoration of half a century of partnership between the peoples of the world. We therefore need to take stock of the past 50 years, assess our achievements, weigh our failures and reflect so that we can forge ahead. This is also an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the ideals of the United Nations, to renew our faith in the Organization and to pledge to it our undivided political and resource support so that it can effectively face the daunting challenges of peace and human development as we enter the next millennium.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Wilhelm Höynck, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Wilhelm Höynck, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

His Excellency Mr. Wilhelm Höynck, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Höynck: The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) gladly accepted the invitation to take part in these celebrations, and it is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the OSCE.

Five decades is a long life for an international organization. The very fact that we can celebrate this anniversary today is evidence of the strength of the United Nations.

Looking into the future, we need the United Nations even more than in the past. In spite of setbacks, disappointments and shortcomings, there are encouraging and even inspiring signs indicating further progress towards worldwide cooperative and comprehensive security.

Such progress cannot be achieved without the United Nations. We need a United Nations which can fulfil the tasks assigned to it in the Charter — as we understand the Charter today — on the basis of 50 years' experience.

The problem-solving potential of the United Nations depends almost entirely on the support it receives from its Member States. It is the contributions of Member States which make the United Nations credible, strong and effective.

We live in one world, rendered ever more closely connected by our indivisible destinies. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other organizations in its region are willing to make their contribution to a lasting and peaceful order from Vancouver to Vladivostok. As regional organizations become able to assume the tasks assigned to them in the Charter, the United Nations will become stronger. Regional action will alleviate the burden that has proved to be too heavy for the United Nations. This will

> "contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs." *(A/47/277, para. 64)*

On this we all agree, but we still have to find better ways of achieving mutually reinforcing cooperation. We must improve our ability to allocate tasks according to comparative advantages.

The situation in the world today requires an ever more closely interlocking network of international organizations in which the United Nations must have a special place. Only with such a network will we be able to cope with the challenges confronting us. We should give further thought to how we can integrate non-governmental organizations more effectively into such a network. Through non-governmental organizations, responsible citizens, in particular young people, participate in the difficult task of peace-building. Let us engage their specific operational capabilities and their dedication.

Efforts to strengthen the management and to streamline the structures of the United Nations are just one aspect of the tasks confronting the community of nations. These efforts will succeed only if they are rooted in our faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms and in the dignity of the human being. These common values were the beacon of hope that the founding fathers of the United Nations wanted to establish in the aftermath of crimes against humanity and a devastating war. As we know today, the light of this beacon, despite all the efforts that have been made, has not been strong enough to illuminate expanding areas of darkness.

This is not the fault of those who have served the United Nations in the 50 years of its existence. It has had dedicated men and women who served it. Some of them gave their lives. Dag Hammarskjöld was one of them. He lived, worked and died as a servant of peace. If that outstanding Secretary-General could speak to us today, he might repeat what he said 35 years ago:

> "Working at the edge of the development of human society is to work on the brink of the unknown. Much of what is done will one day prove to have been of little avail. That is no excuse for the failure to act in accordance with our best understanding, in recognition of its limits but with faith in the ultimate result of the creative evolution in which it is our privilege to cooperate".

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Wilhelm Höynck, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Moneta, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I now call on the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Moneta, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System.

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Moneta, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Moneta *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is an honour for the Latin American Economic System (SELA) to participate through the Permanent Secretary in this special session of the General Assembly.

Clearly, the balance sheet for these 50 years of United Nations activities is positive in connection with the objective of the maintenance of international peace and security. But there still exist serious areas of tension and conflict which require more resolute action by the system. Moreover, there must be greater democratization in the decision-making process within the Security Council.

Unfortunately, we do not find the same favourable balance sheet in the field of economic and social development. The effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council has constantly diminished. While an important contribution in sectoral areas has been made by the specialized agencies, the United Nations as such has still not succeeded in gaining enough support to agree on effective policies binding the entire international community to a serious effort of development. Rather, we are seeing the erosion of international cooperation and a dwindling of United Nations presence in debates and decisions on international economic relations and the promotion of sustainable development with social equity.

This process of exclusion is exacerbated by policies aimed at keeping the United Nations apart from economic themes. Latin America and the Caribbean, as indicated by SELA's Latin American Council at its last meeting, does not share this view because it would be a serious limitation of the objectives for which the organization was established. In addition, it would remove the indispensable underpinnings of action in the field of international peace and security. Peace and development are one and any intention to separate them would lead the world to even more serious conflict.

Moreover, the growing globalization of the world economy and the parallel process of regionalism require that developing countries make an ever greater effort to effectively join the global market. As was reflected in the recent World Summit for Social Development, our countries must respond to a two-fold challenge to grow and modernize it and, at the same time, resolve the serious and potentially explosive social debt characterized by the considerable expansion of poverty and marginalization.

In this context, Latin America and the Caribbean have been making major efforts to achieve productive change with equity. Similarly, Latin America and the Caribbean firmly intend to reaffirm their identity and diversity in the emerging new international order. And for this we are developing our regional processes of consultation, cooperation and open integration. Globalization and regionalism do not, in any way, mean accepting without any discussion one homogenizing model, but, rather, exploring valid alternatives where, with our own cultural identity, we can incorporate the valuable experience of our members with those of other parts of the world. The United Nations is the best place for an exchange of views leading to a new world order respectful of diversity in the framework of the so-called global village.

We look forward to the negotiations on the establishment in the framework of the United Nations, of an agenda for development. We believe that, together with the adoption of effective measures for international cooperation, to put into practice the commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, "An Agenda for Development" represents an exceptional opportunity for the United Nations again to play its central role in articulating a global vision of international economic relations and world development. This vision, of course, should include, as a matter of priority, the views of the developing countries. It should also lead to agreement on policy guidelines and concrete commitments in the field of international cooperation, the responsibility for which today resides mainly with the international financial and monetary institutions.

I would like to express SELA's great appreciation SELA for its cooperation with the United Nations and specialized agencies. Special mention should be made of the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the activities of the Permanent Secretary of SELA to benefit the 27 States members of the System, both through the regional programme and the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

A contemporary French philosopher said that some men turn action into ideas, while others turn ideas into action. Let us pool our efforts so that, through the United Nations, we may be enabled — in accordance with the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations that has just been adopted — to carry out this task together.

The President: I thank the Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Moneta, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American Economic System, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States.

His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Gaviria (*interpretation from Spanish*): The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has mobilized the entire world. Leaders from every corner of the Earth have come to this forum to pay tribute to five decades of achievement benefiting peace, development and well-being. The American hemisphere could not be absent from this tribute, which is why, as Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), I wish to express to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and, through him, to the United Nations the support of the people of the Americas.

Our continent, which is today united by the values of democracy and freedom, regards the United Nations as the most appropriate and effective instrument to further the collective aspirations of mankind. During these three days many have mentioned the successes of the past. We should like to join in this recognition of half a century of activity and success. Seeing it in perspective, we are impressed by how much has been achieved, but it has not been an easy road for the United Nations. Keeping alive the ideal of a common destiny in a world divided by apparently irreconcilable hatred is perhaps the Organization's main contribution.

Despite being frequently on the brink of the precipice, mankind, thanks to the United Nations, has retained its faith in certain shared ideals. These walls, even at the darkest moments, have nurtured the dream of a world united and at peace.

Many have also mentioned that this is a good time to pause and look to the future. It is necessary to do so, not only because this commemoration is an appropriate occasion, but also because there has never been a more auspicious time for the promotion of collective action and multilateralism. The main challenges that affect the world community today cannot be overcome unless we pool the determination of all nations. Poverty and hunger, environmental degradation, international organized crime, arms trafficking, the violation of human rights, terrorism, the arms build-up and nuclear proliferation are examples of the challenges that transcend frontiers.

In a world without the threat of the cold war, the preservation of peace and collective security are no longer the responsibility of a few but have become an obligation of all. Only with States' vigorous participation in and commitment to the United Nations and the other regional and global multilateral institutions will it be possible to find the solutions that the global agenda requires. Those who today support a policy isolationism and non-involvement in world affairs, because of a myopic conception of national interests, are sowing uncertainty as to world stability and peace. Clinging to a mistaken sense of fiscal frugality, some would like to save a few cents at the cost of sacrificing the viability of a new international order.

In saying this, I do not mean that it is not essential to undertake a profound review and reform of the United Nations and all the other international organizations in order to root out inefficiency, cut away whatever is superfluous and bring their activities into line with the priorities of the Member countries. In the Organization of American States, as in the United Nations, we are already doing this. But we cannot allow those who, frequently alone, have shouldered the ideal of a world at peace to fade away from lack of support precisely when the dream is finally within reach.

There are those who selfishly seek to argue that, in a world where strategic confrontation has ceased to exist, the powerful can allow themselves the luxury of forgetting the deaths elsewhere. Since there is no enemy, they say, there is no longer any threat. How mistaken they are. The threat is no longer communism but, rather, the spectre of the wars of the past, in which ancestral hatred, territorial ambition and atavistic fear could unleash boundless catastrophe. The threat is no longer capitalism but, rather, an unresolved agenda of urgent global problems.

For this reason we owe congratulations to Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, who, inspired by the spirit of the United Nations and this celebration, have risen above what is described in their countries as parochialism or nationalism for the sake of the huge potential in well-being and peace that multilateral cooperation can achieve.

I should like to conclude by making an appeal. Let us ensure that when the euphoria of this celebration dissipates, the constructive spirit that can be felt in the international climate today will remain, so that the United Nations becomes the setting where the hope for a better world is translated into reality. Let us see to it that in 50 years' time, when our words are just a distant historical record, this anniversary will be remembered as the beginning of a new era.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. César Gaviria, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call on the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee.

His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Tang Chengyuan: On behalf of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, I have the honour and privilege to offer felicitations to you, Sir, on your election to the high office of the presidency of this Assembly and to express our profound gratitude for the manner in which you have presided at this Special Commemorative Meeting.

It is a matter of honour and pride for me, on behalf of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, to address the distinguished and eminent persons gathered here to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I should like to join those speakers who have already congratulated the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and yourself, Sir, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is not synonymous with the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Indeed it is more.

To look back on and address the question of 50 years of the United Nations is to consider the process of the institutionalization of international cooperation in our system, in which the geographical, physical, biological and economic processes are interrelated. The work of the United Nations to date has not only shown us that institutionalized cooperation is possible and workable, but has also amply demonstrated that, in the interdependent but fragile environment of contemporary international society, cooperation is more than ever necessary as a multitude of demographic, economic, environmental, political, technological and criminal factors overwhelm State decision-makers.

An overview of the institutional cooperation forged by this universal institution reveals far greater areas of progress and effective, cooperative action through the work of the Organization than the popular impression would appear to indicate. Over the years, the peoples of the United Nations,

> "determined to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours",

have, *inter alia*, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights. They have acknowledged that climate is the common concern of mankind, declared the seabed and ocean floor beyond the national jurisdiction of States to be the common heritage of mankind, and resolved to use outer space for the common benefit of mankind.

The spectacular results attained in the speeding of Trust Territories and non-self-governing Territories to full nationhood, and the current near-universal membership of the Organization, represent another achievement of this institution. These are among the salient factors that, *inter alia*, underscore the institution's commitment to the cause of maintaining international peace and security. The Secretary-General's recommendations in his "An Agenda for Peace" reinforce the principles of the non-use of force in international relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The end of the cold war and the dissipation of the East-West conflict that it characterized have ushered in a new era of peace and development.

The achievements and successful undertakings of the United Nations and its organs stem in part from according due respect to the obligations arising from international law. The Organization has taken appropriate steps to ensure the observance of the rule of law in international relations and the progressive development of international law and its codification through resolutions, declarations and codification conferences. Consensus-building in the codification of international law is by nature a time-consuming and complex process, but the spirit of cooperation kindled by the Organization has kept the international legislative draughtsman and lawyers totally preoccupied, in particular during the ongoing United Nations Decade of International Law.

Over the years, the AALCC has made its modest contribution to the attainment of the objectives and principles relevant to its sphere of competence. I should like, on behalf of the AALCC, to extend to the General Assembly my assurances that the Committee will continue to work to support the activities of the United Nations and to cooperate towards the prevalence of the rule of law in international relations.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I now call on His Excellency Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

His Excellency Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Ahmad: I deem it a great privilege and an honour to be representing the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) at this historic event. As almost everyone who has spoken over the past three days has said, this is indeed a welcome opportunity for us not only to look back in retrospect on the 50 years of the United Nations, but also to reflect on its future in the light of the new dynamics propelling today's dramatically changed world.

With the end of the cold war, the international community is faced with new realities that have altered the fundamentals of global relations, necessitating bold and innovative approaches to the fulfilment of the ideals that inspired the establishment of the United Nations. In this task, regional arrangements, political or economic, are assuming a crucial role as instruments of peace and development. The Economic Cooperation Organization is one such major regional organization. It comprises 10 member States, all sharing common bonds of history and a collective vision for a future of progress and prosperity. Devoted solely to the socio-economic well-being of its member States, ECO is playing a pivotal role in the stability of a vast region in Asia's heartland.

As the Executive Head of that organization, I avail myself of this opportunity to renew, on behalf of the ECO member States, their full commitment to and support of the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. ECO is an outward-looking organization ready to work and cooperate with every country, region and international organization in pursuit of global peace, harmony and sustainable economic development. We support the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General to remove the causes of conflict and distress in all parts of the world.

Today, the "iron curtain" is no longer there, but a "poverty curtain" still divides the international community into two unequal worlds, one embarrassingly rich and the other desperately poor. We certainly need a just, fair and equitable economic order free of discriminatory and protectionist walls. It is in this direction that the United Nations should focus its attention in the coming years.

The international community must develop new patterns of collaboration on the basis of equality, partnership, interdependence and mutuality of benefit. Let us all work together and bring the United Nations into conformity with the role that it is required to play to lead us and succeeding generations into the new millennium with peace and honour.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Shamsad Ahmad, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call now on His Excellency Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

His Excellency Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey (*interpretation from Spanish*): The signing of the Charter of the United Nations 50 years ago in San Francisco was surely this century's most important event for mankind. It represented the ongoing desire of international society to put an end to war.

We must recognize that the Charter of the United Nations was not the first worldwide attempt to achieve lasting peace. It was, however, the most complete one of its time. Susceptible, like all human activities of improvement, the Organization was subsequently marked by conflict between the great Powers and the needs of the small ones. For decades before and after San Francisco, theoreticians of international relations saw global policy in terms of conflict. The ideological frame of reference during that time enabled the strong to do whatever they liked and obliged the weak to do whatever they could.

In February 1967, nearly 22 years after the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, Latin America and the Caribbean, at the core of the cold war without being part of it, gave mankind the example of the Treaty of Tlatelolco for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which established the intergovernmental organization that I have the honour to represent, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin American and the Caribbean (OPANAL), and which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world in keeping with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco is a unique, incomparable Treaty in many respects, but, above all, it is the oldest one of its kind because it pre-dates the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and goes beyond it in banning nuclear weapons. In addition, it is the first disarmament treaty which was signed and ratified by the five acknowledged nuclear Powers, respecting the wishes of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean and guaranteeing their status. It should also be emphasized that the Treaty of Tlatelolco recognizes that nuclear-weapon-free zones are not an end in themselves, but rather a means to achieve the subsequent stage: general and complete disarmament.

Allow me to recall what then-Secretary-General U Thant said:

> "It is easy to see the magnitude of the obstacles that block progress in the field of disarmament and arms control, which is so complicated and frustrating. But these same difficulties enhance the merit and the significance of what you have achieved. In a world that too often appears obscure and ominous, the Treaty of Tlatelolco will shine like a beacon".

Secretary-General U Thant was not mistaken. This year, in 1995, 28 years after being opened for signature, the Treaty of Tlatelolco has become universal, having been signed by all 33 States which are members of the Latin American and Caribbean region — as the best fiftieth birthday gift for the United Nations.

Understanding that there are only two ways of establishing and putting into force a legal order in international relations, namely either through force or through consensus, our region chose the latter through negotiation and conciliation of positions — which was not always easy to do. Consensus is the harmonization of desires, and in the political field the harmonization of desires means balance among the parties, based on the lack of coercion, legal equality of States, free determination of peoples, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for treaties freely agreed to, peaceful settlement of disputes and cooperation for the common benefit. All of this means, in turn, the clear and definite renunciation of the threat or use of force. All of these principles, while not always fully respected, have made the United Nations great by making it necessary for the maintenance of world peace and for the promotion of the social and economic development of peoples.

The need to faithfully respect all of these principles, all of which are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, in the Treaty of Tlatelolco and in most of the other international instruments that govern us, highlights the primacy of multilateralism as an essential element in relations among nations of the world. But let us recall that this primacy can be achieved only through the firm political will of the States parties to reach agreement related to the firm commitment to respect what they have committed themselves to. In other words, there is a legal commitment that binds parties to the letter of agreement, and a moral commitment that binds them to its spirit.

Fortunately, only rarely has the United Nations been harshly criticized; sometimes for having been ineffective in dealing with problems where ideological confrontations or clashes of interests were visible. Rarely, also, has there been praise for the immense benefits the international community has enjoyed under the Organization's management, such as peace-keeping operations or the countless funds allocated to Member States that need technical and economic assistance. This is why the current financial crisis being experienced by international organizations, and, of course, by other organizations such as OPANAL, is regrettable, incomprehensible and unacceptable. Let us remember that the commitment of parties is not only legal, but also moral, and that only the parties to international treaties themselves can determine their strength, their endurance and their successful management. We believe that it is time to give serious thought to the latter aspect before the lack of cash erodes the foundations of one of the greatest ideas produced by mankind.

For a world free of nuclear tests; for a world free of nuclear weapons: from this rostrum, as Secretary-General of OPANAL, I congratulate the United Nations. I pay tribute to the citizens of the world who enhance it. On behalf of the regional organization I represent, I wish the United Nations every success in its invaluable endeavours. Only the efforts of its Members can ensure this success.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Senator Humberto Celli Gerbasi, President of the Latin American Parliament

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I call now on His Excellency Senator Humberto Celli Gerbasi, President of the Latin American Parliament.

His Excellency Senator Humberto Celli Gerbasi, President of the Latin American Parliament, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Celli Gerbasi (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, a body which has carried out important work benefitting the international community and its main component, the individual. When the United Nations was formed in San Francisco, on 26 June 1945, the world saw the challenges and objectives that the young Organization had to face — to protect the world from war and to foster peace and security; to promote economic and social progress; and to define and protect the rights and freedoms of every human being without distinction as to race, language or religion.

The United Nations has made a great effort to attain its objectives. However, we have witnessed armed conflict in many parts of the world. These conflicts have not only taken millions of lives, but they have also left very serious economic and social consequences.

The Latin American Parliament has established its position on the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the irreparable damage they cause to people and to the environment, but we have just seen two countries — France and China — permanent members of the Security Council of this Organization, detonate deadly devices, disregarding the outcry of the people of the world against them, disregarding people and their habitat as well as the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The problem of the external debt continues to strangle the developing countries, requiring greater and greater sacrifices on the part of their citizens. For 20 years the Latin American countries, and many developing countries in Africa and Asia, have been making efforts to export savings to cope with external debt servicing. This has created problems such as the exacerbation of poverty and has led to the difficulties that these countries are facing in the functioning and modernization of their production equipment and social infrastructure.

The amount of the overall external debt of the developing countries as of 31 December 1994 was $1.6 trillion. It is therefore of the utmost importance for the peaceful development of international relations to define the legal framework for regulating the general principles of conventional law, in terms of obligations, and those of modern international law, and for this purpose the competent body is the International Court of Justice in The Hague. This is a good opportunity to emphasize the importance of having the General Assembly of the United Nations request the International Court of Justice in The Hague, in the exercise of its advisory competence, to specify the necessary legal principles with respect to external debt, which are essential to the achievement of justice and to the preservation of peace among peoples.

New terms of understanding must be created, and a code of conduct should be established. As a temporary, immediate measure, it should be recommended — and this Organization could cooperate in this respect — that interest on the external debt be calculated in terms of its real value, which is 40 per cent lower on the secondary market.

Another very important element that affects the public interests of our country is corruption. It is therefore necessary to emphasize that the ninety-fourth conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Bucharest, Romania, from 4 to 14 October this year, adopted by acclamation a resolution on parliamentary action to combat corruption and on the need for international cooperation. This document sets forth the national and international steps that should be taken to eliminate this worldwide scourge.

At the close of the twentieth century, the prospects for the developing countries are not very encouraging. We feel that there should be an ethical obligation to allow for the economic growth and social development of all nations, one in which there are no exploiters and no exploited and in which freedom, peace, harmony and social justice prevail.

We wish to begin the twenty-first century with clear, open and equitable prospects for all. We believe that in the next millennium, our descendants will inherit a hospitable planet, capable of perpetuating the human race in dignity and honour.

The President: I thank the President of the Latin American Parliament for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Humberto Celli Gerbasi, President of the Latin American Parliament, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Julio Icaza Gallard, Director of Functional Integration at the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/12 A, I now call on His Excellency Mr. Julio Icaza Gallard, Director of Functional Integration at the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System.

His Excellency Mr. Julio Icaza Gallard, Director of Functional Integration at the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Icaza Gallard (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Central American Integration System (CAIS) congratulates the United Nations on this historic occasion, which happens to coincide exactly with the granting to our organization of Observer status.

Our organization of the six States of the Central American isthmus has as one of its fundamental underpinnings respect for the principles and norms of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States (OAS), which demonstrates that our systemwide subregional nature binds us firmly with the regional system and with the global system represented by the United Nations.

Accordingly, the new era that this commemoration is ushering in — this new era of peace, democracy and cooperation, to which the United Nations must adapt — is, for the Central American Integration System, a global example that we, as a Central American organization, have begun to follow, through the coordination of all of our regional integration organs and institutions in order that we might become a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

The current recognition, in the United Nations, of the fact that worldwide peace, security and stability can be achieved only if the economic and social needs of peoples are met is shared by the Central American Integration System, whose concept of development is integrated in such a way as to tackle simultaneously, in a harmonious, balanced way, the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental spheres. Central America's historical experience reveals the indissoluble relationship of all these sectoral aspects of development. It is therefore necessary for their respective agendas to be viewed as the integral and harmonious parts of a single whole.

That is why our new model of Central American democratic security, to which we are giving concrete expression through the negotiation of a treaty on this very important matter, seeks precisely to protect and promote this kind of central, integrated development, which focuses on the human being, on the men and women who live in Central America.

We also welcome the consensus that has emerged as the result of the activities of the United Nations on the concepts of sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Central America has, for its part, defined its concept of sustainable development as a process of gradual change in the quality of life of human beings, centred on the individual as the primary focus of development, through economic growth with social equity and through the transformation of production methods and consumption patterns, a process based on the ecological balance and necessary support of the region. This process requires respect for regional, national and local ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as the strengthening of peaceful coexistence through the full participation of citizens, in harmony with nature and without compromise, so as to guarantee the quality of life of succeeding generations.

In Central America, sustainable development represents an integrated approach to development that requires simultaneous efforts, and needs progress to be made on the path towards democracy, social and cultural development, sustainable economic development and the sustainable management of natural resources, and improvements in the quality of the environment.

It is evident that the changes foreshadowed here on this anniversary within the 185 States which today are Members of the United Nations have begun to be felt in the Central American isthmus in the context of the Central American Integration System, our Central American organization, so that this historic decision of the Heads of State and Government and the heads of delegations of Member States of the United Nations to redirect the United Nations so that it better serves mankind, particularly those who suffer and lack basic needs, will be supported and followed with particular attention by our organization, given the desire to have, in the twenty-first century, a United Nations equipped and structured to serve effectively the causes of peace, development, equality and justice.

The President: I thank the Director of Functional Integration at the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Julio Icaza Gallard, Director of Functional Integration at the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: We have heard the last speaker for this Meeting. I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Greetings to you all, at the end of this historic Meeting. Greetings to the leaders of the world.

(spoke in English)

Ladies and gentlemen, you are part of the largest gathering of world leaders in history. Your presence speaks, as you have spoken, with eloquence, of confidence in the future of the United Nations.

One hundred and twenty-nine Heads of State and Government have come to the United Nations to mark its fiftieth anniversary. We have listened to the wisdom of those leaders. Together they have given the world an Agenda for Tomorrow. An Agenda covering every aspect of human society.

Those who made possible this extraordinary event deserve our deepest thanks. To Ambassador Butler and the Preparatory Committee: your work laid the foundation for this successful gathering. And through your work, this Meeting closes with the adoption of an historic Declaration. The States of the world have today reaffirmed the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and their commitment to them. They have resolved to redirect the United Nations to ever greater service to humanity, especially those most in need.

To the thousands of non-governmental organizations around the world: you have forged a new global partnership with the United Nations through your contribution to this effort. Out of it will come new associations and teaching projects which will vastly strengthen our common action in the future.

Our thanks go also to the Observers from non-Member States and from other organizations; to the heads of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system; to the members of my advisory group on the fiftieth anniversary; to Ms. Sorensen, who has directed UN50; to the Protocol Office; to the many global sponsors of this event; and to our permanent host, the City of New York.

On behalf of the United Nations, I express my appreciation to Mayor Giuliani, Commissioner Sylva, the New York Police Department and the people of New York City, for their patience, cooperation and warm welcome.

None of this could have been achieved without the dedication and tireless efforts of the United Nations staff: the fiftieth anniversary secretariat; the staff of Conference Services; of General Assembly Affairs; the interpretation and translation services; the security personnel, and many, many more. All are living, shining examples of the United Nations and its ideals — of peoples of the world engaged in service to peoples of the world.

All of this attendance, this dedication, this hard work, show that the United Nations has the support of the citizens of the world and their leaders. I am convinced that together we can enable the United Nations to serve the world of the future.

(spoke in French)

During these past three days, the family of nations has been meeting in this house of nations, at the moral centre of the world. During these past three days, the dialogue of nations sought by the founding fathers has been taking place in friendship and fraternity.

During these past three days, we have seen the spirit of San Francisco live again. May this spirit guide us during next 50 years to achieve the "virtuous planet" described by the Arab philosopher Al-Farabi several centuries ago.

(spoke in Arabic)

Long live the United Nations!

(spoke in French)

Long live the United Nations!

(spoke in English)

Long live the United Nations!

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

We have come to the end of this Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I must express my great satisfaction with the fact that it was such a great success, showing the world that a Meeting of this magnitude and importance could be organized so well by the United Nations.

For this success, I should like to thank all the speakers for trying to keep to the necessary time-limit. In addition, I thank the Secretary-General and all the staff and support units, and Ms. Gillian Sorensen, without whom we would have been unable to meet at all.

My gratitude goes also and especially to the staff of the General Assembly.

Last but not least, I should like to thank the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary and its Chairman, Ambassador Richard Butler, whose hard work made it all possible.

(spoke in French)

What more eloquent testimony can we find to the merits of our Organization than the presence here in New York of such a large number of Heads of State and Government? They came to celebrate but they also came to meet and to exchange ideas amongst themselves on the future of the United Nations, for this international forum is still the chief framework of international relations. It still formulates the fundamental principles of social and economic conduct. It is the Assembly that unifies the nations of the world. Now and henceforth it must continue its function as catalyst for the progress of mankind.

Since the birth of our Organization 50 years ago, the number of Member countries has more than tripled. Virtually all the countries of the planet have requested and been accepted as Members. As far as we know, none wants to leave. What further proof do we need of the value of the United Nations?

(spoke in Spanish)

The many statements made from this rostrum have constantly referred to the ideals of the United Nations — peace and development, human rights, international cooperation. I heard no one defend the practice of war or the refusal of assistance to the least fortunate peoples. Nor did I hear anyone praise the virtues of dictatorship or the advantages of isolationism.

Of course, it is not enough to proclaim ideals. Ideals must be put into practice, but the fact that all the Member States agree on what the common values of the United Nations are means that part of the work has already been done. Now we must work together to agree on the ways of achieving these ideals.

These have not been three days of mere words. We have seen former leaders of war now transformed into leaders of peace, nations that in the past suffered under the power of dictatorship have now become democratic nations and countries formerly isolated have emerged as members of important regional organizations committed to multilateralism.

(spoke in English)

Excellencies, all Member States have recognized the need for bold reform. Let the political commitment that has been demonstrated here over the last three days continue in your work at the United Nations and let us now go forth and strengthen our Organization.

Our work has already begun. The many proposals made during this Special Commemorative Meeting are part of the process of reform. Let us keep working together towards a better United Nations. Let us face the urgent financial crisis before us and let us lay down the foundations of a strong, efficient and visionary Organization for the future.

Last night we heard Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and its Ode to Joy. In that magnificent piece of art, joy is said to be based on freedom and brotherhood. Let us then continue to work for peace and development together, in the hope that one day we will find joy in freedom and brotherhood.

I declare closed the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 29.

The meeting rose at 11.35 p.m.